



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

The Lifeguarding Experts

BACKGROUNDER

About the Lifesaving Society and Swim to Survive

The Lifesaving Society estimates that about half of Canadian children never take traditional swimming lessons. To address this, the Society runs a “Swim to Survive” program, which teaches the essentials needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. Grade 3 students are taught to **ROLL** into deep water, **TREAD** water for one minute and **SWIM** 50 metres. Swim to Survive programs are available across Canada. Over 500,000 children across the country have participated in the program to date.

Based on the data available and the 2010 Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario’s Drowning Review, there was a recommendation to make swimming a part of the school curriculum so that children graduating from elementary school can swim and are knowledgeable about water safety skills. Consequently in 2012, the Lifesaving Society announced the development of the *Swim to Survive+™* program, targeting children in Grade 7.

The *Swim to Survive+™* program, geared toward presenting more realistic situations for children in Grade 7, builds on the skills taught in the original Swim to Survive program. The + (plus) means that students are taught to **ROLL**, **TREAD** and **SWIM WITH CLOTHES ON**.

In addition, Swim To Survive+™ teaches kids how to assist a friend who may have accidentally fallen into deep water. “It’s natural to want to jump in after your friend and try to save them,” says Barbara Byers, Public Education Director for the Lifesaving Society. “But, you are putting both yourself and your friend at greater risk of drowning.” Instead, Byers suggests students should be taught these three key skills: **TALK**, **THROW** and **REACH**.

When a friend or family member unexpectedly falls into deep water, *Swim to Survive+™* teaches students to remain on the deck or boat, call for help – either 911 or get assistance from an adult – talk loudly and encourage the person to kick to safety. If the person requires further assistance, students are taught to throw a buoyant aid to assist them while continuing to verbally encourage them to continue kicking. Lastly, if students must reach to assist the person, they are taught to be sure to remain on the deck/dock/boat, lower their body, or lie down and then reach out with an aid (like a pool noodle or a lifejacket) to their partner, all while continuing to verbally encourage the person to kick to safety.

In addition to the more rigorous fitness component with the ROLL, TREAD and SWIM while wearing clothes, Swim To Survive+™ also requires students to complete a fitness swim that helps build stamina. Participants are trained to swim four intervals of 10 to 15 metres each on their front or back, with 15 to 30 second rests and a pulse check at each interval. “This added fitness test really helps students become more aware of their own fitness and endurance levels and limitations,” says Byers.

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With the financial assistance of the **Stephanie Gaetz KEEPSAFE Foundation**, founding sponsor of Swim to Survive, the Society was able to develop and pilot the *Swim to Survive+™* program across Ontario in 2012. To date, more than 1,000 Ontario children have participated in the *Swim to Survive+™* program. With additional funding from **PPL Aquatic, Fitness & Spa Group** and **TransCanada Corporation**, the Lifesaving Society will be rolling out the program regionally in the 2013/14 school year.

About Swim to Survive

The Swim to Survive program was launched in 2005. Swim to Survive teaches children three basic skills in sequence: roll into deep water; tread water for one minute; and swim 50 metres (statistics show that most people who drown are less than 15 metres from shore or safety). It is not meant as a replacement for standard swimming lessons; however the program is an important first step to being safe around water and could make the difference between life and death when immersion in water is sudden and unexpected. Educational resources include a video on YouTube in eight different languages.

About The Stephanie Gaetz Keepsafe Foundation

Preventable injuries are the leading cause of death among Canadian children, more than all other causes combined. The Stephanie Gaetz Keepsafe Foundation is a charitable foundation founded by Barbara Underhill and Rick Gaetz to promote safety education and injury prevention. The Foundation works with injury prevention professionals to support and fund safety programs for children in schools and communities across Canada.

The Stephanie Gaetz Keepsafe Foundation is the founding sponsor of both the *Swim to Survive* program and the new *Swim to Survive+* program. For more information, visit www.keepsafefoundation.com.

About PPL Aquatic, Fitness & Spa Group

PPL Aquatic, Fitness & Spa Group is one of Canada's largest swimming pool companies specializing in the design, construction, equipping, and servicing of commercial pool and fitness facilities. The Company has a recreational staffing and lifeguard supply division that provides over 60 full-time and 150 seasonal lifeguards and recreational attendants to apartments and condominiums across the GTA.

PPL was founded in 1970 by the Papke family and Dale Papke is still active in the company as CEO and shareholder. In 1988, Paul Denstedt became a shareholder and President of the Company, overseeing day-to-day operations. In 2013 company veterans and Vice-Presidents Tim Bown and Steve Onoprijenko also became shareholders.

For over 30 years PPL's staff, customers, and suppliers have teamed together to raise charitable funds via PPL's annual swim-a-thon. Starting in 2007, PPL has donated these funds to the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive Program for which PPL has earned the Society's Darnell Cup for each of the past four years. In 2013, PPL and the Papke family became a founding contributor to the Swim to Survive+ program with both a generous donation as well as a commitment to raise even more donations from fellow pool and spa industry professionals.

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About TransCanada Corporation

TransCanada is a leader in the responsible development and reliable operation of North American energy infrastructure. The company's vision is to become a North American community infrastructure leader by collaborating to build safe and vibrant communities. In its commitment to become a trusted community partner, it is supporting the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive+ program to help keep communities throughout southern Ontario safe by preventing water-related injuries and deaths. For more information, visit www.transcanada.com.

About the Lifesaving Society

The Lifesaving Society is a full-service provider of programs, products and services designed to prevent drowning. We save lives and prevent water-related injury through our training programs, Water Smart® public education, drowning prevention research, aquatic safety management and lifesaving sport. Each year, more than 1,000,000 Canadians participate in the Society's swimming, lifesaving, lifeguarding and leadership programs. For more information, please visit www.lifesavingsociety.com.

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