

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Event to Address Epidemic of Drowning Incidents in Inland Empire

First 5 and Community Partners to Discuss Prevention Awareness Measures in Riverside & San Bernardino Counties

(May 10, 2010) RIVERSIDE, CA – [First 5 Riverside, the Riverside County Children & Families Commission](http://www.rccfc.org), is hoping to put an end to an entirely preventable tragedy that affects thousands of children each year—drowning or near-drowning incidents. On Wednesday, May 12, First 5 Riverside and First 5 San Bernardino will be holding a drowning safety prevention event in partnership with Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital, Safe Kids Inland Empire and the Drowning Prevention Network and in the pool area of Loma Linda University Drayson Center, located at 25040 Stewart Street in Loma Linda.

One of the leading causes of death among California children under age 5 is drowning. This year the issue remains a concern with two child deaths even before the year is half over.

Wednesday, community volunteers, safety officials and seven major community agencies will share collaboration efforts sparked by an Inland Empire Eagle Scout project and plans to decrease the number of deaths and injuries of children through age 5. This includes a goal to raise awareness among more than 20,000 pool owners directly in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

“With the swimming season already upon us, it is important that parents and other adults keep an eye on their children,” said Dr. Shamel Abd-Allah, chief of pediatric critical care at LLUCH, who will be providing a medical perspective of the effects of near-drowning incidents. “Over the years, I’ve seen many children suffer needlessly from the long-term effects of near-drowning incidents. Once the brain is left with no oxygen or blood flow for a significant period of time, the results can be devastating and can even prevent the child from walking or talking again.”

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First 5 Riverside, the Riverside County Children & Families Commission, is a division of the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services. It is funded by Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues. Established by the County Board of Supervisors in 1999, First 5 Riverside supports early childhood development through educational outreach, partnerships and funding for early education, health and child care services that benefit children, from prenatal to age 5, and their families. Research shows that support helps children develop a strong foundation for success in school and throughout their lives. For more information about First 5 Riverside programs and other funded services, call 800-266-3880 or visit www.rccfc.org.