

Program Summary

City of Maricopa | 2019

Maricopa Swims



GWR Presents Maricopa Swims Safe in the Water

The importance of water safety is always at the forefront of peoples' minds as summer approaches. Unfortunately, drownings continue to occur despite increased awareness. Global Water and the City of Maricopa have partnered with Maricopa Unified School District (MUSD) to help combat these preventable tragedies by eliminating barriers to water safety for area youth. With the support of our local school district we hope to provide basic water survival education to every Maricopa youth by the time they reach third grade. This milestone is important, because statistically, if a child doesn't learn to swim by the time they reach third grade, they're more likely to never learn. It's understandable that as a child moves in to adolescence, embarrassment adds to their fear of water.

How it works

The program is simple in theory. Throughout the fall and spring, the City, and MUSD will schedule schools to participate in a four-week program specifically designed to give children a greater chance at survival if they fall in the water unattended. Each class attends a weekly 45 minute lesson at Copper Sky's Aquatic Center. Children are assessed individually based on the national standard for swimming ability and then placed in the appropriate curriculum. Children not only receive instruction in the water, but also learn water safety education including personal awareness around water and how to react if they see someone else struggling in the water. After the four-week program we established benchmarks that indicate each child's improvement, and most importantly, their ability to safely return to the wall or edge after jumping or falling into a body of water. Every participant receives a report card with a pre- and post- assessment that shows their growth throughout the program.

Pre Program Parent Survey:

1. If your child fell into a body of water unattended they would survive.

- a. Agree
- b. Uncertain
- c. Disagree



Overcoming barriers

The Maricopa Swim program is designed specifically to remove existing barriers preventing our youth and families from receiving basic water survival classes. These barriers include cost, transportation and time. The partnership between Global Water, MUSD and the City of Maricopa has allowed us to address and remove all three barriers. By generously supporting the program financially, Global Water removed the barrier of cost and has provided funding for the initial pilot and expansion of the program for the first three years. This generous support also provides for transportation services to and from the schools, thus eliminating the burden from the school district. At present, this program is not a budgeted school function, so this financial backing was critical to the partnership. MUSD staff saw the vision and value of the Maricopa Swim program and worked to identify the best opportunity to conduct a pilot program during school time so that, first graders at Maricopa Elementary and Butterfield Elementary Schools could attend. Through this partnership, all three barriers were removed and 198 first grade students received water survival lessons.

Outcomes

For the pilot program, Copper Sky staff hosted 198 1st graders from Maricopa Elementary School and Butterfield Elementary School. Of the 198 students, only 15 of the children indicated that they had some formal swim lessons prior to this program. At the first day assessment, 160 of the 198 children were afraid to jump into water 3 feet deep. None of the pilot program participants were able to complete the assessment to the Starfish Institute's National Standard for swimming skills. After the four week program, 190 of the 198 (95%) children were able to jump into water over their head and return safely to the wall. Providing the children with the skills and awareness to survive was our primary goal and measurement for program success. We also surveyed the parents and only 50% of the parents believed their child would survive falling into the water unattended when the program started. After the 4 week program 89% of people believed their child now had a chance to survive. 100% of parents saw and increase in their child's confidence in and around water, this is important because overcoming the fear of water, is key to learning to be safe in it. 100% of parents saw the program as a good use of school time.

Post Program Parent Survey:

95%

of the children were given a chance to survive if they fell into the water.



Moving forward

We expect that the outcomes we've shared from our fall pilot will be confirmed in the upcoming spring program when we look to expand the program to three other MUSD schools. Going into the 2020/21 school year we hope to schedule every elementary school in Maricopa to reach our program goals. We also wish for this program to become a part of the curriculum and fabric of our local education system for first graders so that it continues and creates a water safe community.

Post Program Parent Survey:

3. This program is a good use of school time.

- a. Agree
- b. Disagree

100%
a. Agree



“Great feature to have and implemented into public schools’ curriculum and to target that age group around 1st graders, great way to prevent future drownings”.

- Parent of participant

THANK YOU!

A special thanks to our sponsor Global Water Resources, their board, and in particular Ron Fleming, Jon Corwin and Beth Huerta who believed in this program before a single lesson was given. Thank you also to Maricopa Unified School District and its staff including Superintendent Tracey Lopeman, Principals Jennifer Robinson (MES) and Janelle Hildick (Butterfield), and P.E. teachers Paul Krigbaum (MES) and Steve Sorenson (Butterfield), who supported us when they're already doing so much to help our community.