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TEN YEARS OF SAVING LIVES AT WATER SAFETY DAY

"Official Kickoff to Swimming Season" Unites the Community, as Economy Increases Drowning Risk

Phoenix, Ariz. (February 12, 2009) Ten years ago, the population of Maricopa County was 2.9 million. Y2K was a top headline, the economy was sound, and Arizona's average five-year child drowning rate was 8.8 children per 100,000. And, for the first time, the community came together to fight child drownings at Water Safety Day.

Today, one million more people reside in Maricopa County, our five-year average child drowning rate has fallen to 4.5 children per 100,000, a collapsing economy has increased the drowning risk, and the 1200 first graders from the East Valley and Phoenix will attend the Valley Toyota Dealer's **Tenth Annual Water Safety Day**, also presented by SRP Safety Connection. The event has come to be known as "the Valley's Official Kickoff to Swimming Season," and will be on **Tuesday, March 24, 2009, at Mesa Community College, 1833 W. Southern, from 9 am to 1:30 pm.**

Children attending Water Safety Day participate in a seven-week learning process, including curriculum lessons in the classroom. The effort is organized by Water Watchers at Phoenix Children's Hospital, and more than 500 volunteers are expected. Mesa Fire Department will act as the hosting department, providing significant assistance and support.

This one-of-a-kind celebration has an abundance of **strong visuals** and activities, including:

- **Water safety rescue demonstrations** and lessons, in the crystal blue waters of our heated swimming pool
- The Valley's most unified display of public safety support in the form of **fire trucks, helicopters, and ambulances**
- Special **Build-A-Reminder workshops** with La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries, which will allow children to take home crafty reminders of the lessons they've learned
- A high-energy **singing firefighter show**, a fascinating **puppetry show**, and a large **Kid Zone** carnival area

**** Please note: Early morning media opportunities are available. Due to the size of the event, we will be credentialing members of the press. Please provide us with the number of people from your organization who will attend in advance, so we can have your credentials on hand. ****

About Water Watchers at Phoenix Children's Hospital

Water Watchers at Phoenix Children's Hospital has been educating the community about drowning prevention for more than ten years. The group was founded in honor of Weston Letter, who drowned in 1998. The award-winning Water Watchers program brings efforts like Water Safety Day and Drowning Impact Awareness Month to the community, and uses the latest data and studies in injury prevention to create research-proven strategies for public health. For more information, visit www.phoenixchildrens.com or call 602-546-1712.