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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

North Suburban YMCA Introduces Initiative to Help Prevent Drowning Deaths in Children

Northbrook, IL - As part of its 50th anniversary, the North Suburban YMCA rolled out a new swim safety initiative called **2 Seconds 2 Long**, a signature program aimed at preventing drowning deaths in children. Shockingly, drowning is the most common cause of death for children ages one to four, and the second most common cause of accidental death for ages five to 14. The Y's new **2 Seconds 2 Long** initiative addresses this safety crisis head-on, providing water readiness evaluations for second-graders, as well as free instruction for children who do not meet minimum safety standards.

Emphasizing the Y's status as "America's Swim Instructor," the NSYMCA is conducting swim safety assemblies at 7 schools in Wheeling and Northbrook to teach K-3rd grade students the importance of being safe around pools and lakes. The Y uses "Safety Sam" to train students how to become swim safety ambassadors and teaches them to never swim alone, to notify an adult if someone *is* swimming alone, to RKF (relax, kick, float) if the child falls in the water, how to use lifejackets, and what to do when someone falls in the water.

"Student safety is always our focus, so we are happy to partner with the NSYMCA for this assembly," said Terry Ryan, Communications Director at Northbrook School District 28. "There are a lot of pools in the area as well as the lake, so it's important that kids learn the skills to be safe around water."

After the assemblies, second-graders are invited to the Y to participate in a swim safety assessment based on their safety consciousness around water. Children who don't pass the assessment will be invited to participate in a 6-week **2 Seconds 2 Long** program to teach them how to be safe around water, when to yell for help, and basic swim techniques.

The **2 Seconds 2 Long** program is one of several innovative programs launched in connection with the NSYMCA's 50th Anniversary. Other initiatives include the Enhance[®] Fitness Arthritis Management program, the Diabetes Prevention Program, Social Responsibility projects; S.T.E.A.M. youth education opportunities; and other goals to advance the Y for the next 50 years.

For more information about the North Suburban YMCA's 50th anniversary and the **2 Seconds 2 Long** program, visit NSYMCA.org.

About the [North Suburban YMCA](http://NSYMCA.org)

Celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2018/19, the North Suburban YMCA provides individuals in Northbrook and 15 surrounding communities with programs and tools that help them become healthier, more connected, and confident, ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. The NSYMCA focuses on Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility and is a charitable organization, inclusive and welcoming to all in our community. Learn more at NSYMCA.org.



Photo Caption: Westmoor School hosted the North Suburban YMCA's **2 Seconds 2 Long** assembly to teach children about the importance of water safety. From left: Second grader Cecelia Pace, third grader Levi Maer, and teacher Lori Meek look on as host "Safety Sam" teaches attendees about water safety.