

AZ Insider: Michael Phelps was Poolside in AZ to Highlight Pool Safety

Written by Kathy Shayna Shocket reports on the people who make a difference.

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One of the most famous athletes in the world **Michael Phelps** was poolside in Arizona - but for this special event - the 28- time Olympic medalist wasn't there to compete.

As President of his **Michael Phelps Foundation** - he was there to showcase pool safety.

Along with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (Cpsc) Pool Safely campaign - the Michael Phelps Foundation celebrated its 10 anniversary and recognized the 10 years since the passage of the Virginia Graeme Baker (Vgb) Pool & Spa Safety Act.

"The progress our Foundation has made over the past decade is remarkable, but far too many children are drowning each year," said **Michael**.



Cpsc's Acting Chairman Ann **Marie Buerkle** and Michael Phelps spoke passionately about each organization's decade milestone and the continued importance of water safety. "As a result of the landmark Vgb legislation, there have been zero drain entrapment-related deaths involving children in public pools and spas over the past decade," said **Buerkle**.

She and **Michael** stressed that by working together, we will combat the public health crisis of fatal child drownings."

City of Peoria Mayor Cathy Carlat, along with **Melissa Sutton**, President of the Drowning Prevention Coalition of Arizona and the National Drowning Prevention Alliance, also spoke remarks, lauding local and national water safety efforts while reinforcing the urgency of the issue.



There was an impressive water safety event that included a swimming lesson with children from the City of Peoria and a swim stroke clinic with participants in the Special Olympics of Arizona.

Michael Phelps, joined by **Cathy Bennett**, of the Michael Phelps Foundation and the instructor who first taught Michael how to swim, and World Champion Swimmer and Michael Phelps Foundation Advisory Council Member **Allison Schmitt**, led in-water activities that highlighted the elements of the Foundation's signature IM program.

After the in-water activities, participants joined more than 200 young swimmers from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Phoenix and Colorado River for a community water safety event featuring water safety activity stations.

Michael led children in taking the Pool Safely Pledge, which asks children to affirm that they will: ask parents for swimming lessons, never swim alone, and always stay away from drains in pools and hot tubs. In addition to Pool Safely, Michael Phelps Foundation, and the City of Peoria, other water safety organizations at the community event included: CPR Party, Drowning Prevention Coalition of Arizona, JCMF Children's Charities, National Drowning Prevention Alliance, ZAC Foundation, City of Peoria Fire-Medical Department and Peoria Firefighters Charities.

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Sadly, drowning remains the leading cause of unintentional death for children ages one to four years old. An average of more than 350 children under the age of 15 die each year in drowning incidents.



Kathy Shayna Shocket is a freelance Writer, and TV- Field Producer. The former TV-Reporter has written for publications such as **TIME** Magazine, **MONEY** Magazine, **PEOPLE** Magazine, ***The Hollywood Reporter*** and The **NEW YORK TIMES**. You can reach her at redcarpetgirl@aol.com