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**City launches swimming project for kids ahead of festive season to prevent tragedies**

Drownings are listed as one of the top causes of unnatural death amongst children in South Africa.

Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality has several suburbs and townships that are near or close to bodies of water which makes the life skill of swimming essential.

Every summer, thousands of visitors flock to the beaches in BCM and sadly so, many families go back home with one of their loved ones wrapped in a body plastic bag.

To prevent any more of these tragedies, the Metro and its sister City, the City of Leiden established a Water Safety Project in January 2016 where youngsters from Isibindi Child and Youth Care and Safe Park in Duncan Village were given introductory swimming lessons and trained on water safety.

This year, the programme continues with a 6-month swimming programme where 20 youngsters from the Safe Park and another 20 from Scenary Park ages 9 to 15 will be equipped with water safety skills.

The group from Scenary Park are children who were involved in the drowning tragedy at the Umzonyana Dam in Scenary Park where a young life was lost in February 2017.

The programme will ensure the identified participants are able to practice water safety activities in different aquatic environments and are able to swim and surf in a safe and fun way.

BCMM Spokesperson Samkelo Ngwenya said: “It is our aim that the life skill of swimming is imparted to as many children as possible and that they are exposed to the different forms of water sport including swimming, diving and surfing without fear.”

Buffalo City and the City of Leiden will spend a total of R137 550 towards the project covering costs that include swimming equipment and gear, transport to the venue and salaries for project team.

The launch will be held on 1 November 2017 at the Orient Pool, 14h00. In attendance will be the Executive Mayor Xola Pakati, Portfolio Head Cllr Xolani Witbooi and the BCMM Sport Committee.

**Ends**

**For more Information, you can contact** **Bathandwad@buffalocity.gov.za**

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