

For Immediate Release

Media Contacts:

Don Eberly, 404-574-2904 or doneberly@eberlypr.com

Monica Miller, 404-574-2900 or monicamiller@eberlypr.com

Pool Safety Tips for Parents

Keeping Your Child Safe in and around the Pool this Summer

March 24, 2006 — ATLANTA — Every year an average of 350 children drown in pools and another 2,600 are treated in emergency rooms across the nation for submersion incidents; creating a safe pool environment can drastically decrease these numbers. This fourth leading cause of death among children 5 and under can be prevented by using proper pool safety measures.

“With the proper layers of protection, the chance of a child fatality or injury in a pool is severely reduced,” Ken Whitlow, owner of WaterColors LLC, says. Working with homeowners, hotels, apartment complexes, municipalities, colleges for more than 30 years, and, more recently, with local YMCAs, he has expertise in making pools safe for children. “With all the new technology in pool safety features, such as pumps that automatically shut off if they detect a blockage, children are more protected from the dangers a pool once presented.”

Whitlow always incorporates safety design aspects into pools for customers with children. He first chooses a more textured deck for the pool, such as an exposed aggregate or flagstone that is not as slippery and has better grip than the traditional smooth surface deck. Then he creates more broad steps that lead down into the pool. These tiers can double as miniature kiddy pools, and as children become more confident in their swimming ability, they can gradually move a step down further into the water. Whitlow says parents should always consult with a pool designer for ways to make their pool more children-friendly.

“Layers of protection” in the pool industry refers to barriers between the home and pool. The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends having at least three barriers in place. One should always be a non-climbable, self-closing and self-latching 4-foot fence. There should be no more than 4 inches between the ground and bottom of the fence, no more than 4 inches of space between vertical planks, and no less than 45 inches between horizontal planks. If the fence has decorative cutouts, they should have no more than an 1 ¼ inch opening.

- **Safety Covers** - a pool should always be covered when not in use. The cover should meet the American Society for Testing & Materials F-1346-91 requirement; the cover should be able to hold the weight of two adults and a child and be securely in place covering the entire water surface. A solid cover that is held in place by water-filled tubes, that is of lesser value, does not meet this requirement and would cave around a child that happened to step onto it. Power safety covers, controlled by a motor on the pools deck, are recommended above manual safety covers, because the difficulty of closing a manual safety cover will hinder the proper covering of the water surface.
- **Door Alarms** - an alarm will sound in the house if a door to the pool area is unexpectedly opened. All indoor alarms should meet UL 2017 General-Purpose Signaling Devices and Systems, Section 77 requirement; at least be 85 decibels when measured 10 feet away.

-MORE-

- **Pool Alarms** - an alarm will sound in the house if motion is detected around or in the pool that is not expected. There are six types of pool alarms:
 - **Surface Detector** - sounds the alarm if the water surface is disturbed.
 - **Subsurface Detector** - sounds the alarm if water is displaced in the pool.
 - **Pool Perimeter** - sounds the alarm if laser beam is breached around the pool.
 - **Personal Immersion** - wristband, usually in the shape of a turtle, that is worn by the child and sounds the alarm when it becomes wet.
 - **Water Intrusion** - sounds the alarm when it detects sound waves that have been caused by surface or subsurface waves.
 - **Sonar** - considered the best of all the alarms, the active type sends out sonar signals for disturbed water surfaces and the passive type utilizes an underwater microphone to detect sound waves.

Another safety precaution parents can take is to never leave toys in the pool after children have finished swimming, as this may be a temptation to a child to go back for the toys. Steps and ladders to above-ground pools should be removed when the pool is not in use, and outdoor furniture should be placed away from the surrounding fence. Have a professional check your pool on a regular basis to ensure all equipment is working properly and safely. Rescue equipment and a phone with emergency contact numbers should be near the pool at all times. With 75 percent of all child-pool accidents occurring within the first five minutes of leaving an adult's care, Whitlow always reminds his customers that no safety precaution or tool can replace parent supervision.

"Parents should always be within arms length of their children in and around pools," Whitlow says. "No amount of safety design or equipment will protect children who are left alone to fend for themselves in a pool."

###

About WaterColors

WaterColors is a swimming pool and spa construction and renovation company serving the entire metro Atlanta area. Ken Whitlow, owner, has more than 30 years in the pool industry servicing homeowners throughout Atlanta and other customers, such as the City of Atlanta, Marriott Hotels, Hilton Hotels, Sheraton Hotels, Agnes Scott College, and Georgia State University. WaterColors provides personalized services through highly-skilled and dedicated employees to all its customers.

Notes to Editors:

- Media contact for all purposes: Don Eberly or Monica Miller of Eberly Public Relations, 404-574-2900, doneberly@eberlypr.com or monicamiller@eberlypr.com.
- Additional information, interviews, and supplemental high-resolution / Associated Press-ready images may be obtained by directly contacting Eberly Public Relations. Please notify regarding the publication of WaterColors information. Thank you.