



What is SwimTayka?

SwimTayka is saving lives, building the next generation of confident swimmers and clean water stewards. A registered 501(c)3 non-profit organisation in the United States and a charity registered in England and Wales (1176079), SwimTayka provides environmental education and free swimming lessons to underprivileged children who live along the earth's open waters.

SwimTayka is our life mission. We founded SwimTayka in 2016 after swimming a 5-mile stretch of Lake Titicaca from the Island of the Sun to the Island of the Moon. We are open water ultra-marathon swimmer Bryan Avery of Swindon, United Kingdom and triathlete and environmental mediator Dena Marshall of Portland, Oregon USA. In Aymara, a significant language in the Andes region where Lake Titicaca is located, the word "tayka" means "mother." A mother gives her children life skills and teaches them how to care for the planet. We are parents, swimmers, adventurers and conservationists.

Learning to swim is a fundamental life skill. Not only does it build confidence in a child's physical abilities in the water, but it also delivers a necessary connection between her survival in the water and her appreciation for aquatic ecosystems. The skill could make the difference between life and death.

We are intricately connected to our waters. Water is fundamental and irreplaceable. We know that when we connect with the waters where we swim, we feel a sense of ownership and responsibility. We care for the water just as the water cares for us.

With over 372,000 deaths per year, drowning is the third leading cause of accidental injury death in the world, with young low-income children and boys at highest risk. In the United States, we lose nearly 3,500 people to unintentional drowning deaths every year. Drowning deaths are almost always preventable: we can make a difference.

At less than .025% of the world's waters, our world's freshwater resources are in crisis. Nearly everybody in open water is threatened by contamination, overfishing, water shortages, or climate change impacts. As a global community, we must conserve, protect and clean up our oceans, rivers and lakes.

Our teaching curriculum combines drowning prevention and swim lessons with environmental education and water stewardship. Children in the youth program learn necessary skills in water safety, self-rescue, and rescuing others in the water, as well as essential skills in survival swimming. The environmental education component provides a global overview of the earth's waters, the water cycle, and pressing concerns such as erosion, urban development, waste management, climate change, and water conservation. Young adults in our adult education program learn to be community educators, swim instructors, lifeguards and environmental educators.

We collaborate with local community organisations to deliver customised training for the learn-to-swim interests environmental concerns of the waterside community where our projects take place. We also recruit internationally for qualified volunteer educators, certified swim instructors and lifeguards to deliver swimming lessons.