



## **FAST Launches Cannonball Kidz - Free Swim Lessons for ALL Marion County 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders**

Water safety education is essential to children's survival, and drowning is preventable. According to the Florida Department of Health, Florida had the highest unintentional drowning death rate among children ages 0 to 9 from 2017 to 2019. Florida Aquatics Swimming & Training (FAST) is committed to providing free swim lessons for ALL Marion County 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students through the Cannonball Kidz program.

Cannonball Kidz will provide eight free swim lessons to all Marion County students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade for the 2022-23 school year – including students enrolled in public, private, virtual, and home schools. "I am so excited to start Cannonball Kidz! Our instructors are well-equipped and ready to teach students life-saving water safety education skills. We hope to see all Marion County 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at FAST learning how to swim and having fun - for free!" says Gemma Fleming, Director of Swim Lesson at FAST.

FAST exists to empower swimmers to reach their greatest potential for the betterment of the community as a whole – and it starts with learning to swim. Trustee of the Circle Square Foundation, Kenneth D. Colen, speaks to the impact Cannonball Kidz will have on the local community, "Teaching children to swim is fundamental to their healthy development and certainly their survival. We are excited to offer free swim lessons through Cannonball Kidz and to educate children in Marion County about water safety."

Students who complete all eight lessons of the Cannonball Kidz program will receive a t-shirt and 10% off further swim lessons at the FAST Falcons Swim School for the remainder of the 2022-23 school year. To sign up for Cannonball Kidz, please visit FAST at 4635 SW 67th Avenue Road Ocala, FL 34474, and the staff will register your child. Please bring proof of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade enrollment for the 2022-23 school year. For more information about Cannonball Kidz, visit [FloridaFAST.com/Cannonball-Kidz](https://FloridaFAST.com/Cannonball-Kidz).

