



FACT SHEET

OPENING DATE: June 2023

LOCATION: 55 Westport Ave., Norwalk, Conn.

MISSION: To Save a Life, One Lesson at a Time

ABOUT: Kim and Stew Leonard, Jr. opened the first Stewie the Duck Swim School in June 2023 in Norwalk, Conn. The 6,400 square foot state-of-the-art aquatics facility provides more than 10,000 30-minute lessons every year to children aged 6 months and up. All proceeds from the Stewie the Duck Swim School will be donated to the Stew Leonard III Water Safety Foundation to help fund swimming lessons for children in need as well as lifeguard training at its partner organizations throughout the country.

Each of the swim school's 30 instructors and lifeguards are American Red Cross certified in Lifeguard Training as well as certified as a WSI™ (Water Safety Instructor). Instructors and lifeguards complete extensive in-service training and are required to repeat training monthly to maintain a top level of excellence in lesson quality and water safety. Students progress through an American Red Cross curriculum designed for Stewie the Duck Swim School, focusing on water safety and learning to swim, with class levels ranging Parent & Child through Pre-Swim Team.

WOW FACTOR: The Leonard family visited dozens of schools across the country before finalizing a design that is beautiful, functional, and fun. The design of the swim school pulls farm-themed inspiration from Stew Leonard's, as well pops of color and illustrations from the *Stewie the Duck Learns to Swim* book. Navy, white, and wood tones accent the space and the reception area showcases a custom designed check-in desk with a live edge reclaimed wood countertop. A hand-drawn larger-than-life Stewie the Duck illustration is featured on the 30-foot wall behind the pool. Young swimmers also enjoy a push-button Stewie the Duck animatronic and flipping character, a four-foot-tall fiberglass Stewie the Duck figurine, which serves as the backdrop for photo ops when children graduate from one swimming level to the next, as well as a fun, one-of-a-kind Drying Tunnel.

The four-foot-deep pool is heated to 90° F and includes a state-of-the-art filtration system as well as a handicap chair lift. Parents and guardians can sit comfortably and observe the lessons through glass walls while sipping complimentary Stew Leonard's coffee. After the lesson is complete, families can take advantage of private changing rooms with diaper changing stations, hair dryers, bathing suit dryers, and family rest rooms.

BACKGROUND: On January 1, 1989, a 21-month-old toddler, Stew Leonard III, lost his life in a drowning accident. This sparked his parents, Kim and Stew Leonard Jr, to pledge to do everything in their power to prevent this tragedy from striking other families, since drowning is a leading cause of death in children under five. In 1990, they founded the Stew Leonard III Water Safety Foundation in memory of their son. Its mission is to educate children and families on water safety. Since 1990, the Foundation has raised \$6 million to help fund training thousands of lifeguards and providing hundreds of thousands of free or low-cost swim lesson for children in

need. The Foundation's mascot, Stewie the Duck, helps to reinforce water safety messaging to children and families in a fun and educational way.

MORE RESOURCES: Stew and Kim have published two books on water safety, with all proceeds benefitting the Stew Leonard III Water Safety Foundation: ***Stewie the Duck Learns to Swim***, a child's first guide to water safety, and ***Swim Time with Stewie the Duck***, a board book geared for toddlers.

The *Stewie the Duck Learns to Swim* mobile app for Apple and Android stores and Amazon Kindle was introduced in April 2012. The iBook app, which is free of charge, is the first of its kind designed to promote water safety to children. It features read-to-me audio and contains interactive animations, sound effects, a memory game, and a Water Safety Song sing-along. In the past 11 years, this app has been downloaded globally, including by users in Australia, Canada, the UK, and China.

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