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PALO ALTO COLLEGE

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Palo Alto College offers free learn to swim program to nearly 2,000 elementary students**

Alamo Colleges-Palo Alto College has partnered with South San Antonio ISD and Southwest ISD to provide free swim lessons to approximately 2,000 second-grade students from both school districts during the 2016-2017 academic year at the College's Aquatic Center. The Learn-to-Swim program will be offered at the College's recently renovated Aquatic and Athletic Center, a jointly-owned facility with the City of San Antonio.

With support from the city's Parks and Recreation department, the Learn-To-Swim program will address the need for swim-related safety fitness in the predominately Hispanic south side of San Antonio. Palo Alto College's Aquatic Center serves more than 30,000 visitors each year, and more than 25 percent of all visitors reside in City Council District 4, home to South San Antonio ISD and Southwest ISD.

"We are fortunate to have the support from the City of San Antonio and our school district partners to be able to offer this unique swim education to students who might not have access to otherwise," said Dr. Mike Flores, president of Palo Alto College. "As a pillar of our community for more than 30 years, we continually provide partnerships opportunities for students to expand their learning, and that early exposure to higher education is pivotal as they become young adults."

Beginning the first day of swim lessons and over the course of two school weeks, participating second-graders will progress through 10 swim training stations during their 45-minute sessions. With an optimal 1:5 instructor-to-student ratio, swimmers will learn the basic breathing, floating, and stroke skills recommended by Swim America, a national program operated by the American Swimming Coaches Association.

"This is an important and potentially life-saving opportunity for our students. Swim lessons are not something every family can afford, but it's a skill we hope every child can acquire. We strive to provide the best educational experiences to our students and value our partnership with Palo Alto College," said Dr. Lloyd Verstuyft, superintendent of Southwest ISD. "We have a common goal and that is the opportunity for all learners to be confident, resilient, and successful global citizens."

"At South San ISD, our motto is 'Every Child - College and Career Ready', and we are excited to partner with Palo Alto College to ensure that our second-grade students are also 'swim ready', said Dr. Abelardo Saavedra, superintendent of South San Antonio ISD. "Safety is a top priority at South San, and we are grateful for this valuable opportunity to teach our students potentially life-saving techniques. This collaboration aligns with our vision that all students will enjoy successful educational experiences as learning how to swim is a crucial skill that will benefit them in their future."

The 88,000-square-foot Aquatic and Athletic Center at Palo Alto College opened in 1992 as a joint effort with the City of San Antonio to bring a one-of-a-kind swimming facility to San Antonio and has hosted a number of high caliber competitions, including the U.S. Olympic Festival, US Open Swimming

Championships, Senior Olympics Games, U.S Paralympics Nationals, and several NCAA Championships. Open to the public year-round, the pool offers open swim, lap swim, fitness, and recreational programs for all ages. For more information, visit [alamo.edu/pac/aquatic-center](http://alamo.edu/pac/aquatic-center).

Palo Alto College, one of the Alamo Colleges, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and a recipient of the 2015 Texas Award for Performance Excellence. With nearly 9,000 students, Palo Alto College is accredited to offer associate degrees, short-term certificates and non-credit continuing education classes. The campus is located on the Southside of San Antonio at 1400 W. Villaret Blvd. at I-410 and Texas Hwy 16 and online at [alamo.edu/pac](http://alamo.edu/pac).

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