



SAVING POOLS SAVES LIVES INITIATIVE

Why America Is Losing Its Pools — and Why It Matters

TOTAL AQUATIC PROGRAMMING | TOTAL AQUATIC EDUCATION & TRAINING INSTITUTE

There is a problem in the aquatic industry: pools are closing at an alarming rate.

While TAP is concerned about the rising number of pool closures, many aquatic centers operate sustainably and recognize the importance of their programs to the community. These centers continue to offer services focused on safety, health, and wellness, demonstrating that pools can be managed in ways that benefit both the facility and the community. This shows that with the right approach, pools can remain a vital part of community life.

Total Aquatic Programming and the Total Aquatic Education & Training Institute are excited to recognize outstanding aquatic centers. We're also here to offer advice and training to help other centers grow sustainably. Together, we're building a stronger, more vibrant aquatic community.

The Invisible Crisis

America is quietly losing its pools — and no one is counting. There is no national system to track pool closures, hours reductions, or at-risk facilities. Decisions happen city by city, budget by budget, with no shared strategy.

“The United States does not track pool closures nationally, yet CDC data shows that 1 in 8 public pools fails inspection severely enough to require immediate closure. With 300,000+ public pools nationwide, the scale of untracked shutdowns is enormous.”

The Forces Driving Closures

- **Staffing shortages:** Lifeguard pipelines have collapsed.
- **Aging infrastructure:** Many pools are 40–60 years old and failing.
- **Rising operating costs:** Chemicals, utilities, insurance, and labor all climb.
- **Fragmented oversight:** Parks, schools, health departments, and private operators act independently.



In straightforward terms, Total Aquatic Programming has played a crucial role in constructing pools across the U.S. for over 20 years. We have pinpointed three main reasons why pools shut down:

- **Unexpected renovation costs**
- **Insufficient income budgets**
- **Excessive expenses**

Why It Matters

- **Drowning prevention:** When pools close, kids don't stop swimming — they just swim unsupervised.
- **Equity:** Closures hit low-income and historically excluded communities hardest.
- **Public health:** Pools are essential infrastructure for fitness, rehab, and mental health.
- **Community resilience:** Pools anchor youth employment, social connection, and safe recreation.

The Solution

- **An operating system** (the Aquatic Health Club Model) designed to promote sustainable and well-managed facilities.
- **A public narrative** (Saving Pools Saves Lives) that builds political and community support.



The Aquatic Health Club Model

and its relevance to the Saving Pools Saves Lives Initiative

An **Aquatic Health Club Model** is a way of operating an aquatic center like a modern health club — using the pool as the “anchor amenity” — so the facility generates **predictable, year-round revenue** and delivers **measurable health outcomes**, instead of relying primarily on seasonal swim lessons, lane rentals, or one-off programs.

- “We treat pools like essential health infrastructure, not optional amenities.”
- “We build operating systems, staffing pipelines, program design, and revenue models that keep pools open.”
- We collect information from existing members of the Aquatic Health Club Model and disseminate it to others.

Saving Pools Saves Lives Initiative

- “Every pool closure removes a layer of drowning prevention.”
- “When safe water disappears, families turn to unsafe water.”
- “Swim lessons become harder to access, especially in high-risk communities.”

How They Work Together (SPSL & AHCM)

- “Saving Pools Saves Lives is the public story.”
- “The Aquatic Health Club Model is the operating system that makes that story real.”
- “Together, they transform crises into opportunities for growth.”

Is your pool at risk?

Contact Total Aquatic Programming to determine whether your pool or aquatic center is at risk of closure. Reach out to Sue Nelson at snelson@totalaquatic.llc.