



# NEWS

**Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**RRHA YOUTH TAKING A DIVE!**  
*YOUTH SPORTS AND FINE ARTS ACADEMY EXPANDS SCOPE WITH SCUBA  
DIVING CLUB*

**RICHMOND, VA – May 9, 2006**— Over the past two years, the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) Youth Sports and Fine Arts Academy has provided non-traditional sports cultural activities for youth throughout RRHA communities. From ice hockey and tennis to golf and karate, the Academy has been an excellent source for extracurricular activities, educational experiences, cultural enrichment and other resources through workshops, field trips and speakers. As summer approaches, RRHA has discovered another unique sport for participants -- scuba diving!

As of April 2006, RRHA youth, ages 12 and older, have been participating in the Academy Scuba Diving Club. Taught by Jim McNeal, owner of The Dive Shop, with volunteers from local dive clubs including the the Black Dolphins, the class meets every Monday (academic sessions), Wednesdays (hands on training) and Friday (video study sessions) from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Calhoun Family Investment Center at 436 Calhoun Street. Participants receive hands on instruction on all aspect of Junior Open Water scuba diving and upon successful completion of the course, will earn their scuba certification.

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“There is a special camaraderie being underwater with your peers, it is indescribable,” said McNeal. “These kids can learn so much from scuba diving such as team work, responsibility and a sense of accomplishment when you receive certification. I teach the same type of course that adult scuba divers learn all over the world. From becoming dive masters to instructors themselves, the opportunities are endless for a career in this field.”

The Academy also has a swimming program that meets every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at the Calhoun Investment Center. Participants learn how to swim, as well as swimming safety, competitive swimming (Cougars Swim Team) and careers in swimming. The RRHA Cougars are members of the Virginia Community Swim League. They have participated in numerous swim meets around the state and several members have been invited to join the Richmond Racers, a national swimming organization that sponsors local, state and national meets leading to the Olympics and other international competitions.

Since 2004, RRHA’s Youth Sports and Fine Arts Academy has given hundreds of RRHA youths exposure to basketball and football as well as non-traditional sports as golf, tennis, Tae Kwon Do, boxing, and ice hockey. The Academy also provides youths with personal development through educational and enrichment activities such as workshops, field trips and notable speakers. In addition, the Academy provides tutoring, mentoring and other support services that promote academic achievement and build positive character. Ultimately, the Academy helps RRHA youths break the cycle of poverty by encouraging them to become more self-sufficient and independent.

For more information, contact the RRHA Office of Communications at (804) 780-4167.

### **EDITOR NOTE:**

#### **PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:**

- **Scuba Classes** – Monday (academic sessions), Wednesdays (hands on training) and Friday (video study sessions) from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.
- **Swimming Classes** – Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

### **RRHA PHOTOS AVAILABLE of Swimming and Diving instruction.**

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*The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) is the largest housing authority in the commonwealth of Virginia. RRHA serves nearly 10,000 residents and manages nearly 4,100 units through its Public Housing Program and through its various Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Programs provides subsidized housing in approximately 2,900 units. RRHA also manages neighborhood redevelopment and conservation programs throughout the city of Richmond. RRHA has approximately 300 employees.*

