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CONTACT: Scott N. Atkinson  
(863) 874-5682 
satkinson@usawaterski.org

PRESS RELEASE

USA Water Ski & Wake Sports Awarded Sports 4 Life Grant From Women’s Sports Foundation and espnW

Funds will be used to hold Learn To Ski Clinics For Girls Incorporated

POLK CITY, Fla. – USA Water Ski & Wake Sports is pleased to announce it has received a Sports 4 Life grant from the Women’s Sports Foundation. The Sports 4 Life initiative, cofounded by the Women’s Sports Foundation and espnW, supports programs that help girls in four foundational areas – leadership, self-esteem, confidence and perseverance – with the expectation that growth in these areas will also support girls’ physical and emotional health and academic success.

USA Water Ski & Wake Sports is addressing all of these important areas of girls’ development through its Get on the Water Learn To Ski Program with Girls Incorporated of Winter Haven. With assistance from the Cypress Gardens Ski Team, Learn to Ski clinics will take place from 10 a.m. to noon every Monday from June 17 until July 29 at Lake Silver in Winter Haven, Fla. Instruction and practice will be conducted both on dry land and behind the boat. By the end of the program, the participants will have had the opportunity to participate in and master skills in a sport which many youths will never have an opportunity to try. The girls who participate in the program will form strong, new friendships and support from the local ski community and ski clubs, enabling them to continue participation in the sport.

Other local organizations supporting the program include Central Florida’s Polk County Sports Marketing, Florida Sports Foundation, Water Sports Industry Association, Action Water Sports, Citizen’s Bank, Chick-fil-a, and Gourmet Goodies.

“We are thrilled to receive this Sport 4 Life grant from the Women’s Sports Foundation and its partner espnW,” said Nate Boudreaux, executive director of USA Water Ski & Wake Sports. “Our program with Girls Incorporated of Winter Haven strives to create and expand developmental youth sports
programs that serve African-American and Hispanic girls, ages 11-18. The goal is to increase participation and retention of African-American and Hispanic girls in sports."

The Women’s Sports Foundation and espnW created Sport 4 Life in 2014. The inspiration being the knowledge that while sports participation offers tremendous life-long benefits – from improved physical health and self-esteem, to better grades in school and enhanced leadership skills – young girls of color are disproportionately excluded. The 2019 class of Sports 4 Life community partners consists of 50 organizations in 27 states across the country, encompassing 44 traditional and non-traditional sports reaching more than 11,000 middle and high school girls.

"The Women’s Sports Foundation believes that all girls – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ability, zip code or family income – deserve equal access to the lifelong, transformative benefit of sports," said Deborah Antoine, CEO of the Women’s Sports Foundation (WSF). "We’re thrilled to see the exciting diversity of this year’s class – from adaptive skiing to karate, lacrosse to roller derby, tumbling to wheelchair tennis – all creating wonderful opportunities for girls of color to shine and thrive. We’re so proud of this initiative, our partnership with espnW, and the truly impactful work of our community partners."

Since the initiative’s inception, Sports 4 Life has awarded more than 250 grants totaling more than $1.6 million and reaching approximately 60,000 girls nationally. Half of the girls reached by Sports 4 Life programming were not previously participating in sports with regularity, and nearly all girls were interested in continuing sports after participating in Sports 4 Life funded programs. Further, with WSF’s support, the 2019 community partners have been particularly successful in increasing opportunities for girls of color: more than 90% of girl participants identify as African-American or Hispanic.

"espnW is excited to continue our collaboration with the Women’s Sports Foundation on the Sports 4 Life program," said Alison Overholt, who among other responsibilities serves as editor in chief, espnW. “Our espnW storytelling team gives voice to women and girls in sports, sharing their stories of achievement with the world – we love seeing how powerfully these girls’ stories are changed as a direct result of Sports 4 Life.”
About USA Water Ski & Wake Sports

USA Water Ski & Wake Sports is affiliated with the International Waterski & Wakeboard Federation (world governing body) and is recognized by the United States Olympic Committee and Pan-American Sports Organization as the national governing body of organized water skiing and wakeboarding in the United States.

About Women’s Sports Foundation

The Women’s Sports Foundation is a powerful voice, catalyst and convener dedicated to ensuring all girls and women have equal access to sports and physical activity and the tremendous life-long benefits they provide. Founded by Billie Jean King in 1974, we seek to strengthen and expand opportunities for all girls and women to participate in all sports at all levels through research, advocacy, community impact and a wide variety of collaborative partnerships. The Women’s Sports Foundation has relationships with more than 1,000 of the world’s elite female athletes and has positively shaped the lives of more than 3 million youth, high school and collegiate student-athletes. To learn more about the Women’s Sports Foundation, please visit www.WomensSportsFoundation.org, or follow us at @WomensSportsFdn on Twitter, @womenssportsfoundation on Instagram and at www.facebook.com/WomensSportsFoundation.

About espnW

espnW is a global multiplatform brand dedicated to engaging and inspiring women through sports. espnW.com, the brand’s content home, offers total access to female athletes and the sports they play, takes fans inside the biggest events, and captures the biggest trends in sports life/style. espnW also provides a unique point of view on the sports stories that matter most to women and highlights the crossroads of sports and culture. Founded in July 2010, espnW’s content and voices live across digital, television, radio, films, events, educational platforms and social media.

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