



“Bruckner Chase Toa ole Tai Program”

Training the Next Generation of Ocean Heroes in American Samoa

Program Summary:

Following his historic 9-mile adventure swim from Aunu'u to Pago Pago and his ocean conservation outreach to engage the youth of American Samoa, community and government leaders asked Bruckner Chase to design and help implement an open-water safety and ocean conservation program for the youth of America's most remote territory. The Territory's leadership felt that a program that promised a “Bruckner Chase Award” for ocean safety and conservation could capitalize on the island-wide enthusiasm shown by the island's youth to Bruckner's visit and address the lack of ocean safety proficiency in the territory's youth. The outcome of this request is the Bruckner Chase Toa ole Tai (Ocean Heroes) program, which uses highly trained peer educators and mentors to provide free instruction to other youth of the community in how to safely be in and around the ocean. These peer educators are a select group of older adolescents (age 17-20) who are trained in ocean safety, open water swimming and ocean conservation. Youth who complete the Toa ole Tai training successfully are awarded the *Bruckner Chase Toa ole Tai* award and as are then charged with providing classes and structured open water experiences for other youth, organized through villages and/or schools.

Youth who participate in the Ocean Heroes program as students of the Toa ole Tai have the opportunity to earn the *Bruckner Chase Ama taga ole Tai* (Beginners of the Ocean) award for ocean safety, basic open water swimming proficiency and ocean conservation awareness. Youth who earn the Ama taga ole Tai award also have the opportunity to then become involved in regular open water training sessions and competitions, which will earn them the *Bruckner Chase Fetu ole Tai* (Star of the Ocean) award for advanced proficiency in open water swimming. As the program progresses past its initial year, youth who have been awarded the *Fetu ole Tai* have the opportunity to train to become the Toa ole Tai for subsequent program years.

Benefits of the program include: 1) increased self-awareness, self-esteem, tolerance for others, perspective taking, confidence and self-discovery associated with being a peer mentor/educator, 2) the development of marketable skills (public speaking, leadership, organizing, teaching) associated with being a peer mentor/educator and valued in both the public, non-profit, for-profit and academic spheres, 3) increased physical safety of program participants and 4) the development of basic skills upon which further opportunities can be built, for instance, opportunities to become paid lifeguards, to participate in international open water competition and to earn collegiate scholarships.

For more information or to become a part of the Bruckner Chase Toa Ole Tai program please contact Bruckner Chase at synthesis@brucknerchase.com or 831-345-9550. To learn more about Bruckner's ongoing efforts around the world to positively impact how we feel, think and act towards the waters around us please visit www.brucknerchase.com.