



## INTERNATIONAL SURF LIFESAVING ASSOCIATION

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### **ISLA Lifeguards Travel to the Dominican Republic to Minimize Drowning**

**HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA – This November, volunteer lifeguards from the non-profit, the International Surf Lifesaving Association (ISLA), are traveling to the Dominican Republic (DR) as part of an initiative to minimize drowning.**

Founded in 2008, ISLA's mission is to prevent drowning worldwide by building a culture of water safety. Comprised entirely of volunteers; the organization provides training, medical supplies, disaster relief, and emergency personnel to communities in need around the world.

The Dominican Republic shares the Caribbean Island of Hispaniola with Haiti, and is renowned for its plethora of water habitats such as, oceans, lakes, and lagoons. The DR has a high drowning rate; as water education is sparse in the DR, few know how to swim or have the thorough understanding of the ocean, rip currents, and waves.

As part of a three stage initiative to minimize deaths and injuries caused by drowning, ISLA is collaborating with the Dominican Civil Defense-North Coast Sector, Viva Wyndham Tangerine Hotel in Cabarete, Laurel Eastman Kite school, the La Romana-Bayahibe Hotel Association, the International Law and Security Association (ILASA), and several other Hotel Associations and private businesses in the DR.

The third stage of the project begins November 15, 2012 when six ISLA volunteers travel to opposite sides of the country: Cabarete, Puerto Plata on the North Coast and a La Romana-Bayahibe on the South Coast. ISLA is training over one-hundred participants; volunteers from the Dominican Civil Defense, locals with work experience in the surf industry, and employees of the beach hotels.

The training for Basic Open Water Lifesaving will include: Aquatic Rescue recognition and realization, basic oceanography, beach related first aid, introduction to oceanic safety systems, professional lifesaving job development, and physical training.

"Through the three stage initiative we are working towards implementing permanent measures, championed by both the public and private sector, to severely reduce accidental death by drowning," said ISLA's International Relations Manager and Course Instructor, William Koon. "Through our aquatic training, we are increasing the number of trained lifeguards and rescue personnel and building a network of Dominican Lifeguards. But most importantly, through our efforts, we are empowering locals to take charge of their own education programs.

The next step for ISLA and the DR is to establish permanent lifeguard agencies and to empower the public and private sectors to take measures to prevent drowning in order to create a safer aquatic environment for Dominicans and tourists.

To learn more about ISLA, please visit the website at <http://www.islasurf.org> or the Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/ISLASurf>.

#### **About International Surf Lifesaving Association (ISLA)**

International Surf Lifesaving Association (ISLA) is a non-profit focusing on reducing drownings worldwide by building a culture of water safety. ISLA provides training, medical supplies, disaster relief, and emergency personnel to beach communities around the world. Learn more at [www.islasurf.org](http://www.islasurf.org).