

Organization Name: No More Under

Date of Interview: 4/20/23

Organization Interviewees: Chezik Tsunoda and Natasha (Tash) Lloyd

Impact 100 GRT Interviewers: Gretchen Boehm and Melissa West

Application Link: <https://impact100seattle.community/application-details-semi-2023?recordId=recah6l9hARAQbiEf>

Organization Mission: No More Under is a Black led 501(c)(3) dedicated to saving lives through water safety education, legislation, and increasing equitable access to swimming lessons and tools. Black individuals are 150% more likely to drown than White individuals. No More Under believes learning to swim should be a right for all children but prioritizes families and children most in need of services to directly address historical disparities, and promote long-term equity within aquatics.

What are the compelling reasons for Impact 100 to partner with this organization? Chezik Tsunoda lost her son Yori to a drowning accident in 2018. She started No More Under to ensure other families, especially those who lack access to swimming lessons, don't endure a similar tragedy. Drowning is the #1 cause of accidental death for children ages 1-4 and the second leading cause of death for children 5-14. Yet drowning disproportionately affects communities of color, with [45% of Hispanic children and 64% of African American children having limited or no ability to swim](#). Swimming lessons decrease the chance of drowning by up to 88%. Tsunoda and her team are tirelessly committed to ensuring that all Puget Sound families have the opportunity to learn to swim, and feel safe and supported in aquatic spaces.

Further, Chezik's powerful personal story, commitment to the cause, and strategic staff have just enabled the passage of Yori's Law, which will designate May 15th as Water Safety Day in Washington State. As this was only signed into law April 26, 2023, the organization is not quite prepared to fully activate around this legislative win. However, the organization has a huge opportunity to capitalize on the momentum of this designated day to teach children, parents and caregivers about water safety prior to the summer swimming season. Unfortunately, as in most small organizations, No More Under is only receiving grants to teach kids swimming, not to engage in broader advocacy. Support from Impact 100 will allow them to invest in broadening their reach through water safety education.

What, if any, reservations do you have about this organization as a potential grantee partner for Impact 100? None

What does the organization do? Programs and services directly address social inequities for under-served populations through three main initiatives: Swimming Lessons, Water Safety Tools, and Community Engagement. No More Under mobilizes the community by streamlining the registration process and removing financial barriers to lessons, providing swimwear, goggles, and transportation vouchers, thereby addressing the critical financial barriers to water access. They also provide options for continued aquatic recreation once programs are completed by supporting ongoing lessons and pool passes. No More Under will fund 350 under-served children with swimming lessons in 2023 and plans to increase this number annually as part of its ongoing mission to save lives.

Water Safety Tools: The organization has built life jacket loaner stations at 5 public beaches, free of charge, and is sharing signage and instructions related to water safety in multiple languages. In addition, No More Under is developing a pipeline for employment in aquatics with a goal for children at beaches and pools to see lifeguards and water safety instructors who look like them. There is a dire need for staff and especially diverse staff in Seattle pools and beaches. No More Under provides scholarships for pool access, lifeguard training, and instructor training.

Community Engagement: Finally, No More Under is sharing drowning prevention info with pediatrics offices, schools, and others through community events, including launching a new film about the organization called “Drowning in Silence”.

Who does the organization serve? No More Under serves families in King County who are frequently excluded from aquatic activities due to financial constraints and/or ethnic backgrounds. They are currently working through existing relationships with aquatic centers that have expressed interest in bringing more kids from diverse backgrounds to swim, including cities of Tukwila and Renton, Rainier Beach Pool and YMCAs in Bellevue and Seattle.

How does the organization reflect, maintain proximity to and stay accountable to the community it serves? No More Under is a Black-led organization and has 50%+ Black staff and board. No More Under prioritizes community partnerships and works alongside trusted community members such as church leaders, caretakers of youth groups, and on-site managers at low-income and affordable housing organizations. The organization provides information and workshops in communities’ preferred languages. This approach allows insight into the unique needs of different communities and expands their capacity to provide culturally competent programs. No More Under also contracts local swimming instructors to teach its programs, ensuring children engage with instructors from their local community, building connections and support for transformative change.

How is the organization addressing the root causes of social issues? Aquatic accidents have been plagued by systemic racism, financial exclusion and discrimination. No More Under is working to increase equity in aquatics through its programs as well as through advocating for legislation to support water safety. The recent passage of Yori’s Law - making May 15 Water Safety Day - is a vital step in bridging the equity gap and providing all children, irrespective of socio-economic status or race, with the necessary tools to be safe in and around water. The organization is developing targeted outreach strategies to engage Seattle populations (e.g. Black, Hispanic) most statistically impacted by drowning. The goal is that these efforts will also lead to increased advocacy by these under-served communities.

How is the organization collaborating with other community-based organizations? No More Under partners with organizations like Treehouse, United Way, YMCA and local churches/youth groups and community centers where a trusted person promotes learn-to-swim opportunities. The organization is sharing drowning prevention information with schools, pediatric offices, in-person community events, and their growing online community.

What is the vision for the organization in 5 years?

The big vision is that every child learns how to swim, and also finds joy in the water. Some of the specifics include that:

- All Seattle schools provide (at the very least) one health class dedicated to teaching water safety basics;
- With the signing of Yuri's Law into law on April 26, 2023, to build on momentum so that we can prevent tragedies by promoting education and awareness around water safety, increasing access to swimming lessons, and equipping families with the necessary tools and equipment across the Puget Sound and beyond;
- Water watchers and Teen Ambassador Program- that adults/parents/guardians commit to having eyes on children at beaches/pools. Drowning is the 2nd leading cause of death in teenage boys.
- Required watching of "Drowning in Silence" film for lifeguards in Puget Sound area.

What is the organization's area of greatest need? No More Under's programs are expensive. Swim lessons cost \$200/child. Life jackets are \$25-\$30 and they are implementing five life jacket loaner stations at city beaches. They also need more help securing pool space, hiring instructors, and maybe most importantly, working on advocacy to take advantage of its recent legislative victory of Yuri's Law and also promotion of the new film "Drowning in Silence."

Highlight a story of impact.

Tash, the program director, said during a recent learn-to-swim program, "I was fortunate to sit with parents throughout the week. Seeing the pride, and sometimes surprise of the parents as their children gained skills and confidence throughout the program was so, so beautiful. On one occasion, a mother was enthusiastically cheering for her daughter who was about to jump off the diving board for the first time. I realized the mother was crying and gave her a hug. She explained that last summer, her daughter nearly drowned when she ventured into the deep end of a pool. Thankfully adults pulled her to safety. Seeing her daughter capable of jumping into very deep water and keeping herself safe with her new swimming skills moved her to tears... which moved me to tears! It was a goosebumps moment with smiles and happy tears all round!"

Also, recently, a mother of three children could only afford lessons for one child and did not want to choose which one to give them to so she decided she couldn't provide lessons to any of them. No More Under was able to fund lessons for all three children. So many families do not have the financial resources to prioritize swim lessons. Offering these lessons for free empowers parents, many of whom do not know how to swim themselves. Breaking generational cycles, especially those steeped in racism, has a greater impact than we originally thought possible.