



## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Black Kids Swim Launches New Webseries “The Gorée Project” To Unite African-Americans and Senegalese Through a 3.5 Mile Open Water Swimming Competition**



*The Gorée Project will follow the journey of two former Howard University swim team captains as they prepare for their first trip to Africa and an epic swim.*

**Upper Marlboro, MD, July 14, 2020:** Black Kids Swim Inc., the world's leading resource for Black competitive swimmers, launched a first-of-its-kind web series to unite African-Americans and Senegalese through cultural and athletic exchange today.

2020 will mark the 33rd Dakar Gorée swim, where hundreds of Senegalese retrace the same path enslaved Africans traveled some 400 years ago. The Gorée Project will mark the first time in history that an African-American team competes in this symbolic event.

“There is strength in unity” said Ebony Rosemond, founder and executive director of the Maryland based not-for-profit organization. “The African Diaspora needs to come together, especially now, to better protect and support one another. But first, we need to better understand each other. We've put an all-star team together to prepare Howard University alumni, Skylar Smith and Noah Nicholas for this experience; physically, mentally, and culturally. And as viewers, both Senegalese and American, will follow this story. We will begin to break down the stereotypes that have kept the Diaspora fractured for so long.”

Competitive swimming is not diverse. USA Swimming, the nation's organizing body for the sport has some 337,000 members, of whom only 1.3 percent are Black. Juan Caraveo, a sports diversity and inclusion consultant for USA Swimming, called the 2016 US Olympic swim team "the most diverse yet." However, out of 47 swimmers, only three identified as African-American: Simone Manuel, Lia Neal and Anthony Ervin. According to NCAA's demographic database, there were 22,501 swimmers across all divisions and conferences during the 2017-2018 school year. Notably, only 1.6 percent identified as AfricanAmerican, while 76% identified as white. AfricanAmericans are barely present in collegiate swimming as swimmers or coaches. Currently, Howard University is the only HBCU with a swim team. BKS is working to change the sport by creating a web series that showcases Black swimmers excelling in the sport.



Noah Nicholas and Skylar Smith

BKS' objectives for the Gorée Project are to:

- Destroy the stereotype that Black people can't or don't swim.
- Educate African-Americans and Senegalese about their respective history and culture to build community.

The web series is funded through generous donations from the Black swim community and a crowdsource campaign which will launch July 14, 2020 on Black Kids Swim's website. The Gorée Project was created in a COVID-19 environment and in the midst of Black Lives Matter protests. BKS and its production team combined innovative videography and live action screen casting to capture this historic journey.

### Links:

More information on The Gorée Project: <https://blackkidsswim.com/the-goree-project-the-beginning/>

The Gorée Project crowdfund page: <https://BlackKidsSwim.com/the-Goree-project> (goes live 7/14/20)

More information on Black Kids Swim: <https://BlackKidsSwim.com>

Headshot of Ebony Rosemond: <https://BlackKidsSwim.com/images/headshot-Ebony-Rosemond.jpg>

### About Black Kids Swim (BKS):

BKS is a 501c3 organization based in Prince George's County Maryland founded in 2015 to provide access to an increased range of opportunities for Black children by encouraging the development of proficient swim techniques. BKS raises awareness, provides guidance, and serves as the go-to source for information on competitive and non-competitive Black swim team options.

The online community was inspired by the Rosemonds' daughter who is a championship butterfly and freestyle swimmer. One day, their daughter entered the term 'Black Kids Swim' into a search engine and the results were both alarming and saddening. BKS works to change what the world thinks when they hear the words 'Black Kids Swim.' BKS debunks the myth that Black children do not swim well and encourages those who cannot swim to learn!

There are multiple resources to help Black children learn basic water safety skills. Black Kids Swim wants to see our children do more than simply 'survive' in the water. We want them to develop a valuable technique that can benefit them physically and professionally throughout their entire lives.

## Links to Full Size Images & documents:



<https://blackkidsswim.com/images/Goree-Project-Facebook.jpg>

<https://blackkidsswim.com/images/Goree-Project-Facebook.png>



<https://blackkidsswim.com/images/Goree-Project-IG.jpg>

<https://blackkidsswim.com/images/Goree-Project-IG.png>

### Headshots of Skylar Smith and Noah Nicholas



<https://blackkidsswim.com/images/skylar-and-noah-framed.png>

### Blog post #1 - The Gorée Project: The Beginning

#### Excerpt:

During difficult times we search for a way to make a difference. Some way to take action, to make a stand, to DO SOMETHING that challenges status quo and change the way the world works.

Some of us aren't waiting for "authorities" to lead us through - WE are the change we wish to see. BKS isn't waiting for the "right time" to take action - we've already started working.

BKS' commitment to changing the competitive swim space has led us to create The Gorée Project. This special first-of-its-kind leadership initiative is BKS' response to exclusionary practices. It's our method of creating a monumental, trans-continental, unifying project designed to bring the African diaspora into focus and create a lasting relationship, through sport, with our cousins on the other side of the world.

#### Link:

<https://blackkidsswim.com/the-goree-project-the-beginning/>

### The Gorée Project Summary Doc



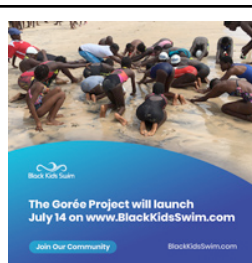
<https://blackkidsswim.com/images/The-Goree-Project-Summary.pdf>



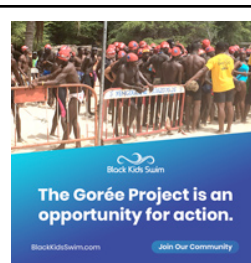
[BKS Gorée 1 link](#)



[BKS Gorée 2 link](#)



[BKS Gorée 3 link](#)



[BKS Gorée 4 link](#)



[BKS Gorée 5 link](#)