



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Boating Foundation Creating More Confident Consumers



A movement is being created in recreational boating by the AustinBlu Foundation.

Miami, FL on February 14th, 2019 – The [AustinBlu Foundation](http://austinblufoundation.org), Florida's recreational boating safety advocate, share their incredible success and hopes for further growth at the 2019 *Progressive Miami International Boat Show*.

As of this month, the AustinBlu Foundation has funded boating safety classes for over 1,000 students. **Classes** are about 5 hours and are instructed by USCG Auxiliary members. After students complete the class, the state of Florida issues them a Boater's ID. In some cases, the ID can be used for discounts on their boater's insurance.

Supported by their founding sponsor, leading emergency beacon manufacturer [ACR Electronics](http://acr-electronics.com), the AustinBlu Foundation also passed the first state **Beacon Bill** which allows boaters who carry a 406MHz emergency beacon onboard an annual discount of 25% off their vessel registration. This incentive should encourage boaters to incorporate the latest safety

technology on their list of purchases when equipping their boat. This is the first piece of legislation in history which incentivizes safer boating practices. As leading campaigners on beacon use and 406 MHz technology through initiatives such as the annual 406Day and ACR SurvivorClub, safety specialist ACR has worked with the AustinBlu foundation since 2015 to help educate people about the benefits of devices such as EPIRBs and PLBs.

The foundation's latest endeavors have been focused on promoting **lifejacket use**. One of which is their "Make Your Mark" campaign set to launch next month. It is a boating safety concept initiated by the AustinBlu Foundation which encourages boaters to mark their boat name and other important contact information on every lifejacket on board; a wise preventative measure should a boating incident occur. The foundation is also raising funds to pay for lifejacket loaner stations on commercial properties such as in dining and entertainment marinas.

With two coastlines and year-round boating weather, Florida is known as the 'boating capital of the U.S'. "There are over 900,000 registered boats just in Florida but unfortunately not even 60% of Florida's boat owners have taken a boating safety class. We wanted to minimize obstacles which may discourage people from taking a class," expressed Blu Stephanos, Foundation President.

The boating industry is an important part of the state of Florida's economy with a total economic impact of over \$10 billion dollars a year. There are over 5,500 businesses which employ over 55,000 people*. "We want to use our foundation to support and promote this industry that means so much to our home state and its people," shared Carly Black, Foundation Vice President.

The foundation will continue to advocate for better boating safety practices and incentives, while growing the geographic and demographic reach of their boating safety classes. The foundation would also like to place as many lifejacket stations in marinas and restaurants as possible. In order to accomplish these goals, Austin's parents, Carly and Blu, are encouraging companies and individuals to be part of their wave of creating a safer boating environment through donations and sponsorships. Afterall, confident boaters quickly transform into customers. To support this great cause or learn more please contact:

info@austinblufoundation.org.

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About the [AustinBlu Foundation](#): It has been over 4 years since Austin Stephanos left the inlet in Jupiter, FL and was lost at sea. Since then, his parents Blu Stephanos and Carly Black have dedicated themselves to their son's foundation raising awareness by funding boating safety classes, by creating awareness on boating safety technology and by partnering with lawmakers to incentivize best boating safety practices. Carly and Blu's commitment to improve boating safety continues; soon boaters can expect lifejacket loaner stands, boating safety classes in new geographical areas and more work with legislators to further incentivize the use of boating safety equipment. *Source NMMA statewide statistics.