

Michelle Koles
The Eena Project
www.eenaproject.com

The Eena Project is a nonprofit organization that educates beach visitors on beach and ocean safety, mainly rip currents. In September of 2006, Kristina Koles (aka Eena) drowned as a result of a rip current off the coast of the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Since her death her family has started this organization to work at preventing such a tragedy.

After her death, Michelle and Steve (sister in law and brother) wrote and produced a 5 minute video, and worked with SeaGrant to use their magnet and brochure. Those 3 pieces of vital information were reproduced and distributed to all the rental companies on the Outer Banks totaling over 10,000 packages. Those companies put the materials in all their homes starting the summer of 2007. Since then The Eena Project has held and participated in beach safety events each summer. Those events included such participants as the National Park Service, Coast Guard, National Weather Service, Sea Grant, various Ocean Rescue teams, and surfing experts. Each group presented, demonstrated, and taught valuable ocean life saving skills to visitors. At those events, visitors not only learned about beach and ocean safety, but were given safety information such as rip current brochures, stickers, cards, and bracelets that remind to "Stay Calm, Swim Parallel".

The Eena Project continues to expand their efforts each year. They will be working on a traveling trunk for schools with rip current lessons, materials, bracelets, and other "fun" things for the students. Also in the works in an emergency group, SEA Team (Support and Emergency Action), to help families of severe and fatal injuries while on vacation.