

# National Black Church Initiative

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PRESS RELEASE

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## The National Black Church Initiative Speaks Out Against Valley Swim Club's Racial Discrimination

*NBCI calls upon all to denounce the pool's actions*

**Washington DC** – The National Black Church Initiative can no longer remain silent about the events that occurred at Valley Swim Club in Huntington Valley, PA late last month. The club's swimming pool had been rented out by the Creative Steps Day Camp for the summer, but the mostly minority children were kicked out of the pool after the first day with no reason whatsoever given to the children, their parents or camp officials. While the club denies any racial reasons for banning the camp from the pool, reports from the campers claim that members of the club complained vocally about black children being in the pool. This was further confounded by the fact that club's president John Duesler stated that the reasoning for the campers removal from the club was that, "there was concern that a lot of kids would change the complexion ... and the atmosphere of the club." The club now denies any racial motivation for the banning of the campers, and has offered a full refund for the camp. NBCI does not believe that monetary refunds and apologies make up for the broken promise, lack of a pool for the children and racism experienced and is thus taking a stand against the racial discrimination that allegedly occurred there and calling on all its member churches to speak out against this in loud and boisterous voices.

While the club's claim that the campers were banned from the pool because of overcrowding issues may or may not be valid, it does not excuse the racist comments heard by young campers from members of the club or Duesler's incredibly insensitive comment after the fact. While the club has issued an apology and a statement that they are an open and diverse organization NBCI

does not see the proof of such a claim nor does it believe that there were no racial motivations behind this. NBCI is saddened by the fact that discriminatory acts such as this still occur in America and champions the fact that U.S. Senator Arlen Specter (D-PA) has launched an investigation into the discrimination claim. We urge him and investigators to attack the case ferociously so that it will stand as a warning to all those who would discriminate based on ethnicity, sex or any other factor that it is not acceptable in this day and age, nor has it ever been acceptable. The Black Church will never stand quietly by whenever and wherever discrimination rears its monstrous head. NBCI has advised its churches to discuss this discrimination and urges the state of Pennsylvania to move with much swiftness in condemning the pool's actions.

Rev. Anthony Evans, President of NBCI, said, "I feel like we have traveled back in time to the early days of integration and the civil rights movement...."

### About NBCI

The [National Black Church Initiative](#) (NBCI), a coalition of 16,000 African-American and Latino member churches works to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare. In addition to our member churches, we have 18,000 sister churches. NBCI is a faith-based health organization dedicated to providing critical wellness information and preventive health screening to all of its members. The African-American community ranks first in eleven different health risk categories. NBCI's purpose is to partner with national health officials to provide health education, reduce racial health disparities, and increase access to quality healthcare.