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Three from U.N. will participate in 'peace swim'

Three members of the United Nations staff are flying in from New York for a mile-long "peace swim" set at 7 a.m. Sunday from East Beach next to Stearns Wharf.

It is the latest in a series of more than 30 winter swims the trio is making to focus attention on 1986 as the United Nations International Year of Peace.

The trio includes Adhiratha Keefe, a 38-year-old UNICEF employee, whose first name means "divine charioteer"; Sunil ("infinite blue sky") Davidson, 38, also of UNICEF; and Shraddha ("faith") Howard, 32, of the U.N. Secretariat.

Keefe swam the English Channel in September to commemorate the U.N.'s 40th anniversary, and Davidson and Howard are both training for channel swims later this year.

Their Santa Barbara swim is part of a weekend series that will include La Jolla, Tijuana and Santa Monica.

The swimmers are members of the Peace Meditation group, which meets twice weekly at the U.N. They attribute the inspiration for their peace swims to their spritual master, Sri Chinmoy, who has been leading peace meditations for U.N. delegates and staff since 1970.

Keefe, Davidson and Howard began their peace journey Jan. 1 with a 1½-mile swim in the frigid waters off Hiroshima, Japan. Five days later they swam in the colder waters of Nagasaki Harbor.

Since then they have swum in nine states, Bermuda, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.