

WATER SAFETY IRELAND REWARDS LIFESAVERS

Seventeen lives were saved from drowning by rescuers who received due recognition at Water Safety Ireland's National Annual Awards Ceremony in UCD last November, while lifeguards and swimming instructors were also rewarded for their efforts in promoting water safety in their communities nationwide.

Michael Ring TD, Minister for Rural & Community Development presented the 'Seiko Just in Time Rescue Award' to the rescuers in appreciation for saving so many lives.

"It is an honour to pay tribute to these deserving award recipients," commented Minister Ring. "Without their bravery, quick thinking and selflessness, the outcomes could have been very different. On average 124 people drown annually in Ireland



Kilkenny Gardaí Aoife Doyle, Caroline O'Brien and James McGuill were presented with the 'Rescue Appreciation and Seiko Just In Time' Award by Michael Ring TD, Minister for Rural & Community Development, and Martin O' Sullivan, Chairman of Water Safety Ireland.

On 7 July 2019, Garda Aoife Doyle saw a young man hanging from a wall, and along with her two colleagues, she rushed to the area in an attempt to stop the person from falling into the river below. Unfortunately, the man plunged into the water. Garda Caroline O'Brien also entered the water and brought the man to the surface. In the meantime, Garda Doyle found a lifebuoy nearby. Garda James McGuill then threw the lifebuoy to Garda O'Brien who was keeping the man afloat in the water. Garda McGuill and Garda O'Brien pulled the man to safety. He was brought to hospital and made a full recovery.



Dublin's Garda Karl Byrne was presented with the 'Seiko Just In Time' Award by Michael Ring TD, Minister for Rural & Community Development, and Martin O'Sullivan, Chairman of Water Safety Ireland.

On 10 November 2018, a man entered the River Liffey. Another individual saw the incident and decided to try to save the gentleman, but this attempt proved unsuccessful and two people were now in difficulty in the water. Upon arriving at the scene Garda Karl Byrne showed decisiveness and jumped into the river from a nearby bridge without fear. Despite the dangers of poor visibility and a strong current, his efforts proved effective and he managed to rescue the two men in the water.



Gavin Buckley was presented with Community & Social responsibility Award by Michael Ring TD, Minister for Rural & Community Development, and Roger Sweeney, Deputy Chief Executive of Water Safety Ireland.

Gavin's brother Aaron died as a result of a water accident in June 2019. Shortly thereafter, Gavin began a journey to spread awareness about water safety and to help Water Safety Ireland with fundraising, published articles and radio interviews. He also talks to secondary school students about the importance of water safety.



Cora Coppinger, teacher at Scoil Eoin in Kilbarrack, Co. Dublin, is pictured with her students, sisters Aava and Zara Nolan Smith, after receiving the Leon Quinlan Perpetual Award for delivering Water Safety Ireland's Primary School Aquatics Programme – Primary Aquatics Water Safety (PAWS) – to pupils at the school.



'Emergency Services Ireland' was honoured with a Media Appreciation Award by Water Safety Ireland at the National Annual Awards Ceremony in UCD. ESI's Editor Grace Heneghan was presented with the award by Michael Ring TD, Minister for Rural & Community Development, and Roger Sweeney, Deputy Chief Executive of Water Safety Ireland.

and while one drowning is one too many, the figure would have been higher were it not for these courageous rescuers.”

Other recipients included 61 volunteers who were presented with Long-Service Volunteer Awards, recognising a combined total of 1,275 years of personal service teaching swimming, water rescue and survival skills in communities nationwide.

VOLUNTEERS COMMENDED

“I would like to commend the efforts of Water Safety Ireland volunteers who devote their time and contribute to the year-on-year trend of reduced drownings”, continued Minister Ring. “The lifeguard service is also crucial to safety on our waterways and it would not be possible without the teaching and assessment conducted by Water Safety Ireland’s volunteers nationwide.”

During last summer, lifeguards rescued 260 people from drowning, administered first aid on 3,284 occasions and reunited with loved ones 289 lost children found wandering unsupervised near water.

At the water safety awards presentation, Martin O’Sullivan, Chairman of Water Safety Ireland, also issued an appeal to all adults to make themselves more aware of the dangers of drowning.

“Tragedy can strike in seconds but with the right knowledge, skills and attitudes everyone can avoid the hazards and take responsibility for their own safety. Encourage your family, friends and colleagues to read Water Safety Ireland’s guidelines at www.watersafety.ie so that they can enjoy Ireland’s waterways safely,” he noted.



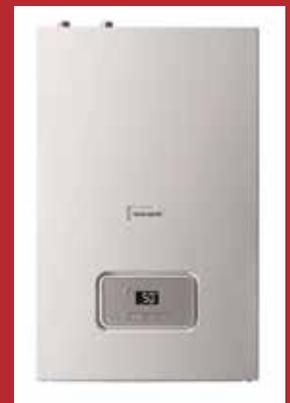
Water Safety Ireland’s National Drowning Prevention Plan is a blueprint to save lives and reduce the number of drownings in Ireland by 50 per cent by 2027. WSI has identified Education, Awareness, Training, Intervention and Action as the five Strategic Drowning Prevention Pillars to highlight the step changes needed.

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