

Water Safety Ireland

National Awards Ceremony 2022

Online

Tuesday, 6th December 2022, 7pm

Master of Ceremonies – Miriam O’Callaghan

Running Order

7pm Welcome by Clare McGrath,
Chair, Water Safety Ireland

Introduction by Joanne Walsh
CEO, Water Safety Ireland

Address by Heather Humphreys TD,
Minister for Rural and Community Development

Presentation of awards will take place in the following order:

- Community and Social Responsibility Awards
- Media Appreciation Awards
- The Leon Quinlan Memorial Award
- The Avery Greene Memorial Award
- The WISE Award
- Long Service Awards:
 - Certificate of Service 10 Years of Service
 - Service Medal of Honour (SMH) 15 Years of Service
 - Bronze Bar to the SMH 20 Years of Service
 - Silver Bar to the SMH 30 Years of Service
 - Gold Bar to the SMH 40 Years of Service
- Volunteer of the Year Award
- Sports Persons of the Year Award
- Life Governor Award
- SEIKO Just In Time Award and Rescue Appreciation Award

A Welcome from the Chair of Water Safety Ireland

Good evening all and thank you for tuning into our Annual National Awards Ceremony 2022.



As Chair of Water Safety Ireland, I am particularly proud of all the recipients that we will recognise this evening and I'm proud for two good reasons. Firstly, the rescue awards highlight great news stories that could have ended differently and secondly, our Long Service Awards remind us of the value of our volunteers and the work that they do in their communities teaching skills that keep people safe. I will give you a quick run-down of the projects that Water Safety volunteers worked on during 2022. We launched the new Wise Programme for secondary schools, we continued our roll out of our PAWS curriculum for primary schools and we expanded the Hold Hands programme for Pre-school children. I am particularly pleased that these three programmes ensure that

water safety reaches all school going ages and is part of our effort to change people's skills, attitudes and behaviours around water.

We also ran a full programme of competitions this year, culminating in the presentation of the Presidents Trophy to Wicklow. National Junior & Senior Teams competed in the World Championships in Italy in September. As well as breaking many Irish records in the pool events, the Irish Junior & Senior Mens Board Rescue teams both came 5th in the world and our Junior Ladies Board Rescue team came 2nd in the World, bringing home silver medals. A fantastic achievement by competitors and coaches alike.

We also completed a full review of WSI's Swimming syllabus, revamping the awards of Seal, Marlin and Orca awards, for re-introduction in early 2023. We also completed a CPD module for open water swimming safety, which is very relevant given the massive increase in the number of people taking to open water swimming during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Every year we hear about drownings in the news and this summer was no different. We averaged 110 drownings in each of the last ten years but that could have been much higher but for the Lifeguards trained and assessed by our members for the beaches and pools around the country. The seasonal beach lifeguards, working at coastal and inland locations nationwide had a busy 2022 summer season. They rescued 578 from drowning, reunited 587 lost children with their guardians, and gave First Aid to more than Six Thousand Six Hundred people. If any message comes from these statistics it is that we must all continue to encourage our friends and family to use lifeguarded waterways – to put it simply - it's the safest place to swim.

World drowning Prevention Day on July 25th was an important part of Water Safety Ireland's calendar, and we should all be proud that the resolution was an initiative of both Ireland and Bangladesh. This year the theme that was rolled out through the World Health Organisation

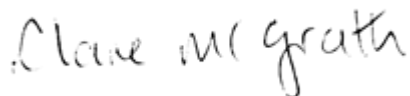
was to “Do One thing” to prevent drowning and it is an understatement to say that I was so proud of our members and the public who supported the day by teaching a water safety skill, learning a water skill, sharing a piece of water safety advice or changing one mind about safety around water. I am confident that we are succeeding in changing mindsets and encouraging people to take responsibility for their safety and the safety of their loved ones and I really believe that together, we can bring drownings down even further.

I wish to thank all the Committees, Commissions, Working Groups and Water Safety Area Committees, as well as outgoing members of Council and Commissions for their contribution prior to 2022. I wish to welcome the new Council appointed by Minister Humphries in March 2022. Thank you to all the staff at the head office in Galway, and in particular, I would also like to welcome our new CEO Joanne Walsh to the organisation, and new staff member Paul McGowan.

This awards ceremony is a celebration of our many volunteers throughout the Country. Water Safety Ireland is built on the amazing achievements of all our hardworking volunteers. We hope to see you as many of you as possible in person at the 2023 event – booked for Dublin Castle next November.

Thank you for tuning in and on behalf of the Water Safety Ireland Council, myself and family, I wish you, and your families, a Happy and peaceful Christmas.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Clare McGrath".

Clare McGrath
Chairperson,
Water Safety Ireland

An Introduction from the CEO of Water Safety Ireland



Good evening, everyone. My name is Joanne Walsh and I have recently been appointed by the Water Safety Ireland Council to the position of CEO. This evening I am delighted to have the opportunity to be here with you all on this wonderful celebratory occasion, albeit in a virtual capacity. Water Safety Ireland is a wonderful example of communities, volunteers and rescue heroes all working together, “ag obair le chéile” for one common goal, to keep lives safe in all aquatic environments.

This event this evening, brings together committee, working group and commission members, volunteers and others from a multitude of groups and supporting stakeholders throughout the country who work tirelessly to provide water safety services to our families, our friends and our communities. Water Safety Ireland never takes for granted this vital and immeasurable work you do every day. This evening on behalf of Water Safety Ireland I want to thank each and every one of you and I look forward to continuing and developing our partnerships further over the coming years.

This evening especially marks a wonderful event, as it is our National Awards Ceremony. We honour our long service recipients who between them have given over 500 years of voluntary commitment to water safety. We will also recognise our newest Life Governors who have demonstrated a particular dedication to water safety throughout their tenure. I would like to congratulate these recipients and recognise the exceptionally high standards of service they have provided.

This evening we will also honour some remarkable rescuers with our SEIKO, “just in time” awards. Other most notable awards include volunteer of the year and community and social responsibility recipients and we honour our memorial award recipients. Also, this evening we will mark our wonderful Sports Persons of the Year awards and deliver our Media Appreciation awards.

Tragically 80 lives were lost due to drowning in 2021, this was four more lives lost in comparison to the previous year. Water Safety Ireland holds a vital position as the key pillar in the promotion and education of water safety in Ireland and in spear heading measures required to prevent accidents in water. Over the last few decades drowning rates have decreased, in Ireland. We can attribute this reduction to many factors, not least our organisation’s rich history of volunteerism and its deep-rooted commitment to drowning prevention initiatives nationwide.

Water Safety Ireland’s key objective is to bring the number of lives lost by drowning down further, but in order to make this happen we need everyone to be water safety aware and water safety conscious.

In the words of Benjamin Franklin **“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”**.
Go raibh maith agaibh go léir. Enjoy the rest of the evening.

An Address from Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development



Hello everyone. To everyone watching this evening, it is a great honour for me to address your National Annual Awards Ceremony. Tonight 4 women and 14 men are being recognised for doing something absolutely remarkable and that is saving a life. You have been recognised for your determination, for your strength, for looking out for others and for your extraordinary displays of courage.

Due to your actions and your bravery, there are people alive today who might not otherwise be. For that you should be extremely proud. Well done to each and every one of you. Your outstanding efforts mean that you really are true

heroes.

Also tonight, I want to say to the people who coach and train people in swimming and lifesaving all over the country, you too are saving lives by enabling others to do so. Without the coaches, the trainers and the teachers, we would not have the large volume of lifesavers across our country that we can be so proud of.

Of course, despite all our efforts, we can't prevent all eventualities. Tragically, last year 80 drownings occurred in Ireland. Each one of these has left behind distraught relatives and friends. Each drowning is a tragedy for all those involved. And that is why we must and will continue to work together to keep the level of drownings as low as possible every year.

This summer, lifeguards rescued 578 people from drowning, administering first aid to almost 6,700 people and reunited 587 lost children with their families. These statistics are startling.

Even though this year's awards are virtual, the many rescues that our brave awardees have been involved in are very real and have saved many people from serious injury or loss.

The lifeblood of this organisation, of course, is its volunteers. One way in which the loyalty and commitment of water safety volunteers can be acknowledged and recognised is through the various awards for service to the organisation. But we can be certain that many people who can now swim, or who are lifesavers, would not have these skills had it not been for the volunteers. The service given by each of today's awardees is exceptional and they deserve this special recognition.

I also express my heartfelt congratulations to each and every recipient of the Rescue Appreciation Awards and the Seiko Just-In-Time Rescue Awards. These awards are made to

members of the public who act without fear or hesitation to assist persons in distress and assist those in danger of drowning.

Their bravery in very difficult and challenging circumstances is to be commended and each recipient is more than worthy of the honour being bestowed.

I must also acknowledge the rollout of the Smart Ring Buoys Initiative last month. With the support of my Department, some 640 ring buoy sensors will be rolled out across eight local authorities.

This project will ensure that our local authority staff are alerted immediately if a ring buoy is damaged or missing from its station.

All these developments will make Ireland a safer place in which to live, work and play whether it is in, on or near water.

I would like to personally pay tribute to John Leech, whose term as CEO has ended. I want to acknowledge the dedication that John has given to water safety, both here in Ireland and internationally. And I wish you every success in your retirement, John.

I would also like to welcome Joanne Walsh, the new CEO for Water Safety Ireland. I wish you every success in your new post, and I would like to thank the new Council for their enthusiasm with which they have taken on their roles.

But above all, today is about you, the recipients of these awards. I would like to thank you all, not just the worthy winners, but each and every one of the volunteers who work tirelessly to make our rivers, lakes, seas and swimming pools safer for the enjoyment of our community. Your dedication is greatly appreciated by me and everyone else who has availed of your tremendous commitment and enthusiasm.

I really would like to congratulate all those receiving awards this evening and applaud your bravery.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.

Press Release

Fifteen lives saved in near-drowning rescues Water Safety Ireland honours remarkable rescuers National Awards Ceremony 2022 Online broadcast - Tuesday, 6th December 2022, 7pm

Fifteen lives were saved from drowning by rescuers who will receive recognition at Water Safety Ireland's National Annual Awards Ceremony, broadcasting online on Tuesday 6th December at 7pm.

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, will acknowledge recipients of the 'Seiko Just in Time Rescue Award' and other awards in appreciation for saving fifteen lives.

"Tonight, 4 women and 14 men are being recognised for doing something absolutely remarkable – that's saving a life," Minister Humphreys said.

"You're being recognised for your determination. For your strength. For looking out for others. And for your extraordinary displays of courage.

"I am deeply honoured to pay tribute to these deserving award recipients", she added. Among the other recipients to receive awards are 30 volunteers who will be presented with Long-Service Volunteer Awards, recognising a combined total of 545 years of personal service teaching swimming, water rescue and survival skills in communities nationwide.

Minister Humphreys continued:

"Also tonight, I want to say to the people who coach and train people in swimming and lifesaving all over the country: you too are saving lives by enabling others to do so.

"Without the coaches, the trainers and the teachers, we would not have the large volume of lifesavers around our country that we can be so proud of."

Water Safety Ireland CEO Joanne Walsh stated:

"I would ask that we all remain aware of the dangers of drowning".

"Drownings can happen quickly and silently but with the right knowledge, skills and attitudes everyone can avoid the hazards and take responsibility for their own safety. Start a water safety conversation with your family, friends and colleagues and encourage them to read Water Safety Ireland's guidelines at www.watersafety.ie so they can enjoy Ireland's waterways safely."

Ends

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Community and Social Responsibility Awards

In recognition of the support given to Water Safety Ireland's community work, charitable activities and commitment to drowning prevention initiatives and the reduction of aquatic related injuries

Timemark

Timemark Limited is a distributor of leading Watch and Jewellery brands. Founded in 1979, and entirely Irish owned and managed, Timemark sponsors the SEIKO Just In Time Award, which they have supported since its inception in 2001 and for which we are deeply grateful.

Canada Life Insurance

Canada Life Reinsurance partnered with Water Safety Ireland to fund lifesaving ringbuoys directly to recently flooded regions of Pakistan. These ringbuoys will be used by first responder medical crews on the ground to help with rescue efforts in areas devastated by flooding. Thank you Canada Life Reinsurance.

Liam Neeson

Liam graciously recorded water safety messages for radio, TV and online, reminding people that learning to swim, learning a lifesaving skill, saves lives. Liam also recorded messages to raise awareness about World Drowning Prevention Day which was highlighted by the World Health Organisation. Thank you, Liam, for supporting our efforts to bring drownings down.

Yuliia Chychul

Yuliia arrived as a refugee from Ukraine and set about translating water safety information for her fellow Ukrainians who were not aware of the coastal dangers around Ireland. Yuliia also attended and translated water safety workshop material that gave advice as part of welcoming our Ukrainian friends and helping them to stay safe at our waterways. Thank you Yuliia.

Nick Corish

Nick Corish has given a lifetime of service to Water Safety Ireland as an Instructor and Volunteer, providing his time and knowledge to teach generations of students how to swim. Nick generously gave his time once more to star in Water Safety Ireland's New Year video, encouraging others to put water safety first. Thank you, Nick, for your continued support.

Media Appreciation Awards

Presented in appreciation for covering drowning prevention issues throughout the year.

National Radio Broadcaster Award: Jennifer Zamparelli, Broadcaster – RTÉ 2FM Radio

At the height of summer, when thousands of people were flocking to our beaches, The Jennifer Zamparelli Show on RTE's 2FM hosted discussions and podcasts that drew attention to the dangers associated with rip currents, inflatable toys and other water safety risks. Thank you Jennifer for informing listeners nationwide on how to stay safe in, on and near water.

Local Radio Station Award: Red FM (Cork)

Cork's Red FM is broadcasting since 2002. Thanks to their ongoing coverage of water safety issues, listeners are more aware of the dangers at aquatic environments. Thank you Red FM.

National TV Broadcaster: Conor Kane, Correspondent - RTÉ News

Throughout the summer, thousands of people gathered on beaches and inland waterways nationwide. RTE News filmed lifeguards at work in Co. Waterford and Co. Galway and also broadcast important summer safety advice. The News team also featured the installation of new smart ringbuoys that will alert local authorities if a ringbuoy is missing or stolen. Thank you to Conor and his colleagues for raising awareness throughout the summer.

Provincial Press Award: Claire McGovern, Editor - The Leitrim Observer

The Leitrim Observer is a weekly newspaper that was first published in 1889. It has promoted many of Water Safety Ireland's messages to readers, emphasising important drowning prevention advice. Thank you Leitrim Observer for highlighting water safety.

National Press Award: Paul Hyland, Journalist - Irish Independent.

The Irish Independent has covered many water safety issues throughout the year including a particularly poignant article by Paul Hyland featuring the family of 14-year-old Bradley Lulendo, who drowned at Burrow Beach in Dublin. Additional reporting included important advice for water users and we are truly grateful for Paul's efforts to keep people safe.

Online Broadcasting: Sophie Collins, Journalist - IrishMirror.ie

Irishmirror.ie is one of Ireland's most read digital news websites. Their continued coverage of breaking news and warnings from Water Safety Ireland helped keep water safety in the public consciousness this past year. Journalist Sophie Collins focused on topical water safety issues

and always included helpful advice. Thank you Sophie for putting water safety front and centre with your readers.

Leon Quinlan Perpetual Award

Corliss National School, Co. Cavan

The Leon Quinlan Perpetual Award is presented to a primary school that has been particularly attentive to the need for pupils to learn water safety skills. When young Leon Quinlan drowned in 2004, his mother Lynn contacted Water Safety Ireland about running an event to raise awareness about water safety. Corliss National School in County Cavan is a small two-teacher school that is committed to delivering Water Safety Ireland's Primary Aquatics Water Safety Programme to their pupils. The children learn about local hazards in the home, on the farm and other aquatic environments nearby. Congratulations to the school for ensuring that the children in their care have the knowledge and skills necessary to stay safe from drowning.

Avery Greene Memorial Award

Sunflower Creche and Playschool, Galway

Avery Greene was just three-years-old when, in 2019, he tragically drowned while on holiday in Spain. Avery's mother Amanda became an enthusiastic promoter of an education resource called Hold Hands that was developed by Water Safety Ireland and distributed to more than 4,000 Early Learning Centres nationwide. It contains lots of games and fun activities designed to encourage this young age group to talk about water safety and it has been embraced by Educators around the country, including today's recipient of the very first Award - the Sunflower Creche and Playschool Galway who played a key role in helping Water Safety Ireland to create the resources for Hold Hands, a programme of activities and games that teach young children how to stay safe around water. Congratulations Sunflower Crèche and Playschool.

The WISE Award

St. Anne's Community College, Killaloe, Co. Clare

Water Safety Ireland's secondary school programme, Water Insight Safety and Education (WISE) programme was launched this year, 2022. It gives pupils the knowledge they need to stay safe. Project work encourages pupils to highlight local dangers and help make their communities safer. Congratulations to the pupils at St. Anne's Community College, Killaloe and their teacher Rosie Foley for their enthusiastic participation in the programme.

Long Service Awards

Long Service Awards are presented in recognition of a voluntary commitment to promoting a public awareness of water safety and rescue based on the humanitarian goal of saving life.

Water Safety Ireland extends a sincere debt of gratitude to the following volunteers.

First Name	Last Name	County	Years of Service
Gerry	Bruton	Offaly	10
James	Murray	Offaly	10
Pamela	McGrath	Clare	10
Yvonne	Byrne	Kildare	10
Catherine	Poole	Kildare	10
Billy	Cantilon	Limerick	10
Stephen	Ryan	Limerick	10
Brendan	Devlin	Louth	15
Bryan	Corcoran	Kildare	15
Susan	Corcoran	Kildare	15
Brenda	Maye	Kildare	15
Patrick	Maye	Kildare	15
Sam	Murray	Kildare	15
Ian	Cunningham	Limerick	15
Joe	Morgan	Limerick	15
Tom	Cusack	Limerick	15
Tom	Slattery	Limerick	15
Valerie	Stundon	Limerick	15
Ciara	O'Sullivan	Limerick	20
Jonathan	Broderick	Limerick	20
Kieran	Goodisson	Limerick	20
Peter	Hogan	Limerick	20
David	Finn	Limerick	20
Diarmuid	Moriarty	Limerick	20
Ken	Moore	Limerick	20
May	Coyle	Louth	30
Mal	Sherlock	Limerick	30
Trevor	Sheehan	Limerick	30
Aisling	Cushen	Dublin	40
Jimmy	Reilly	Dublin	40

Volunteer of the Year Award

Sinead Mortell – Volunteer of the Year

Sinead can be described as an “all-round WSI volunteer”, qualifying as Lifeguard and giving back to her community in Clare as a water safety Instructor and Examiner. Sinead also runs training courses for aspiring Instructors and conducts Risk Assessments to ensure that our waterways are safe for swimming. As a Lifesaving Sport competitor Sinead has successfully represented both her county and country and competed as a Master in this year’s World Lifesaving Championships in Italy. She continues to coach other competitors. And is also a qualified Rescue Boat Driver and somehow found time to be secretary of the local Water Safety Area Committee. Sinead reflects all that is positive about being a volunteer and is a very deserving recipient of Volunteer of the Year, 2022. Congratulations Sinead.

Sports Persons of the Year Award

This summer, after a 2-year gap, the Irish Team went to the World Championships in Italy where the Senior team broke a number of Irish pool records and personal best performances. The Junior team also performed well at the pool, making B finals and attaining personal best performances. The Irish Team placed 11th in overall rankings out of 56 nations. But it was on the beach where the team surpassed expectations. While there were notable performances from the entire squad, the Senior Boys, Junior Boys and Junior Girls Board Rescue teams achieved great success including a World Championship Silver Medal.

Congratulations to our Sports Persons of the Year recipients:

Senior Boys - Odhran Savage and Tom Breen

Junior Boys - Ferdia Hayes and Oisin O'Grady

Junior Girls - Hazel Bentley and Leanna Liddane

Life Governor Awards

The Award of Life Governor is presented to an individual who has demonstrated a particular dedication towards the humanitarian goal of saving life from drowning. All of these recipients also served two five-year terms on the Council of Water Safety Ireland, and we are truly grateful for their combined total of fifty years’ voluntary service shaping and guiding the work of the Council over those two terms. Thank you and congratulations Life Governors.

The recipients are:

Lola O’Sullivan

Tom Doyle

Seamus O’Neill

Anne Ryan

Paul Murphy

SEIKO Just In Time Awards and Rescue Appreciation Awards

Garda Sarah Lynam, Co. Dublin

Last August, Garda Sarah Lynam, a former competitive swimmer, became alerted to the fact that a person was in distress in the water at Bachelor's Quay. She ran from the GPO on O'Connell Street, removed her stab vest and utility belt and swam to the casualty. Once out of the water, she noticed he was not responsive, so she began CPR and he made a full recovery.

Francis Doherty and Maureen Devenney, Co. Donegal

Last May, Maureen Devenney and her sister got pulled out to sea by a strong current. Maureen encouraged her sister to kick her legs and turn over onto her back while Maureen swam to the shore where she got help from Francis who swam out with a ringbuoy and started for shore. Meanwhile, Maureen had organised a chain of six people to wade out chest deep and ring both to safety.

John Timlin, Co. Kerry

Last August 2022, John had just finished a surf lesson at Fermoy strand, Castlegregroy, in Kerry. Suddenly he saw swimmers in difficulty, caught in a rip current. He quickly grabbed a surfboard and paddled out. It took some time to get through the high waves. Eventually, he spotted a motionless girl, weak and semi-conscious, pulled her up onto the board and began a challenging paddle to shore through dangerous conditions. He placed her into the recovery position and after coughing up a lot of water, was kept warm with blankets from his van until emergency services arrived. Thankfully, she made a full recovery.

Sarah Cooke, Co. Offaly

Last July, Sarah was teaching a water safety class at Banagher pool in Offaly. A young man at the other end of the pool got into difficulty so she grabbed a ringbuoy, instructed her class to vacate the pool and brought him to safety.

Sergeant Brendan Byrne and Garda Ronan Allen, Co. Dublin

In August 2019, Gardai Brendan Byrne and Ronan Allen responded to a 999 call that a man was in the river Liffey. When they arrived, two men were in difficulty. Garda Allen entered the water and reached them with a ringbuoy. Sergeant Byrne pulled the rope towards a ladder where Dublin Fire Brigade soon arrived at the scene and helped to take all three people out of the water to safety.

David Caulfield, Dylan Putthaaree and Glen Wightman, Co. Wexford

In August 2021, David Caulfield was driving along the quays by the river Barrow in New Ross, Co Wexford. He saw a man in the water and immediately jumped in and pulled him towards the riverbank where a passing boat spotted them and pulled them both to safety.

Paul Sweeney and Garda Mark O Sullivan, Co. Donegal

In December 2021, Paul Sweeney saw a young man was in difficulty at Rathmullen pier, Donegal. He entered the water and managed to reach the young man. Garda Mark O Sullivan arrived, grabbed a ringbuoy and entered the water. Both men kept the casualty afloat until emergency services arrived. The hypothermic young man was brought to hospital where he made a full recovery.

Jonathan Monroe, Co. Galway

Last July, Jonathan was on his way to work when he saw a person in distress in the Eglinton canal in Galway city. Jonathan entered the water, reached the man and pulled him to safety. He stayed with the casualty until emergency services arrived. The casualty made a full recovery.

Mikey O'Siochru, Co. Dublin

Last August, Mikey had just come off duty as a lifeguard in Sandycove, when he was alerted to a woman in distress in the water. A seal was attacking the woman. He entered the water with a flotation device and upon reaching her, saw that she was injured. Mikey calmed the situation and brought her safely to shore where she received medical assistance for her wounds and made a full recovery.

Saoirse Maloney, Co. Waterford

Last July Saoirse was alerted that a woman was at risk of drowning in a cove in Ardmore. Saoirse swam to her rescue and brought her to safety. The woman was very disorientated but Saoirse continued to reassure her.

Patrick Gordon, Co. Clare

Last July, Patrick was out surfing in strong winds with a friend when they heard a swimmer shouting for help after getting pulled from shore by a rip current. He immediately paddled towards the swimmer and told his friend to make for shore to get help. Patrick took his friend's board, reached the exhausted swimmer, and got him to hold onto the board until he regained his breath and was able to make it safely back to shore.

Josh Marley, Co. Donegal

In August 2021, Josh became alerted to a person in distress in the water at Lifford bridge, Donegal. He immediately entered the river and managed to reach the woman and bring her to the safety of the riverbank where the emergency services took over.

Miley Doran, Co. Carlow

In May 2021, Miley discovered two people, a mother and daughter, in difficulty in the River Barrow. Miley immediately jumped into the water and managed to bring the young girl to safety, before entering the water once more to rescue her mother. An incredible act of courage.

WATER SAFETY IRELAND

What We Do

Water Safety Ireland is the statutory, voluntary body and registered charity established to promote water safety and reduce drownings in Ireland. Our focus is on public awareness and education. Tragically, an average of 110 people drown in Ireland each year, nine every month. We strive to reduce these fatalities by increasing water safety awareness and by changing attitudes and behaviours so that our aquatic environments can be enjoyed with confidence and safety.

1. Education:

- a) An education syllabus that teaches swimming, lifesaving, water confidence, safety, survival, rescue skills and basic life support;
- b) Courses are provided nationwide to the general public and also to children as part of the primary school curriculum in classrooms, pools and open water nationwide;
- c) Many qualifications such as our Pool and Beach Lifeguarding Awards are recognised internationally;
- d) Beach Lifeguards are trained and tested by our examiners for the Local Authorities prior to the summer season each year;
- e) Trained Lifesavers compete in provincial and national Lifesaving Championships and at international level;
- f) Risk Assessments are carried out on bathing areas and waterways nationwide that may pose a particular risk to the public, in order to make them safer;
- g) Train and examine rescue boat crews for the Community Inshore Rescue Services and administer associated VAT refunds.
- h) Water safety training for those working near aquatic environments in the public and private sector.



2. Promotion:

- a) Research, analysis and publication of drowning statistics that inform policy and enable effective targeting of those at risk of drowning;
- b) National and local media to build a public awareness of coastal and inland water safety;
- c) Publications, courses, advice and campaigns in print and online that promote water safety and target at-risk groups in all aquatic activities so that the public adheres to best practices;
- d) Supporting the work of over 5,200 volunteer members and those volunteering and commercially delivering swimming, lifesaving and basic life support training;
- e) A National Water Safety Awards Ceremony that includes the “Seiko Just-In-Time” Rescue Award and other awards that recognise volunteerism and partnerships that promote water safety at national and local level.



Partnerships:

- a) Local Authorities, state agencies, private enterprises and coroners on matters relating to water safety, the provision of Public Rescue Equipment and Lifeguarding locations nationwide;
- b) The Marine Safety Working Group and the Irish Marine Search and Rescue Committee to promote maritime safety;
- c) A range of organisations to help reduce the high number of drownings by suicide;
- d) Conferences, lectures and demonstrations to Local Authorities, Government Agencies, NGO's, schools, Colleges and members of the public.



