NATIONAL AWARDS CEREMONY 2024

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

SÁBHÁILTEACHT UISCE NA hÉIREANN
WATER SAFETY IRELAND

THIS MOMENT
MADE
POSSIBLE
BY WATER SAFETY
Always swim
with a friend.
Enjoy the water safely.
Learn more at watersafety.ie

Water Safety Ireland

National Awards Ceremony 2024

Thursday, 3rd October 2024, 2pm

Running Order

2PM **Welcome by Clare McGrath,**
Chair, Water Safety Ireland

Introduction by Joanne Walsh
CEO, Water Safety Ireland

Address by Anne Rabbitte, Minister of State
at the Department of Health and at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Master of Ceremonies is Bláthnaid Ní Chofaigh

Presentation of awards will take place in the following order:

- Community and Social Responsibility Awards
- Media Appreciation Awards
- SEIKO Just In Time Awards & Rescue Appreciation Awards
- The Leon Quinlan Memorial Award
- The Avery Greene Memorial Award
- Sports Volunteer of the Year
- Sports Persons of the Year Awards
- 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
  - Gold Service Medal of Honour — 50 Years of Service
- Volunteer of the Year Award

A Welcome from the Chair of Water Safety Ireland

Good afternoon and welcome to the Water Safety Ireland National Awards Ceremony 2024.

As Chair of Water Safety Ireland, it is a pleasure to welcome you to the Hibernia Conference Centre, Dublin Castle. Today we honour our 136 dedicated volunteers who have served this organisation for years, many for decades. A total of 2,535 years of service including 930 years of service by members of Community Rescue Boats Ireland will be acknowledged today. We also congratulate our lifesaving sports athletes, and we celebrate many rescue awards which highlight great news stories that could have ended differently, but for the brave reactions of true heroes in the right place at the right time to help save 19 people.

The range of service given by WSI members in their communities throughout 2023 is reflected in some of the numbers that I wish to share with you. A total of 113,272 swimming and lifesaving certificates were issued nationwide. The Lifeguards trained and assessed by WSI and recruited by Local Authorities rescued 249 people at risk of drowning during the summer. 50,292 "Primary Aquatics Water Safety" certificates issued to primary school pupils. The history of WSI water safety summer weeks remains strong as courses in rivers, lakes and beaches ran in 21 counties. Our risk assessors completed 61 risk assessments to make waterways safer and Team Ireland won 24 medals at the Junior European Lifesaving Championships. The future of Lifesaving is bright but we must continue to encourage the public to make water safety a priority as accidents can happen quickly on water.

Provisional figures for 2023 indicate that 78 people died from drowning and I wish to convey our sincerest sympathies to all those families affected by these tragedies. By identifying the key risks and targeting interventions appropriately, Water Safety Ireland aims to reduce drownings in Ireland by increasing appropriate skills, attitudes and behaviours of those enjoying our waters. Everyone should have the knowledge to enjoy water safely.

I wish to thank all the Committees, Commissions, Working Groups and Water Safety Area Committees, as well as members of Council for all their contributions in 2023. Thank you also to the staff at head office in Galway, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to bring so many projects to fruition.

On behalf of all members of WSI, I wish all recipients an enjoyable day of celebration.

Yours sincerely

Clare McGrath

Clare McGrath, Chairperson, Water Safety Ireland

An Introduction from the CEO of Water Safety Ireland

Good afternoon,

As CEO of Water Safety Ireland I am delighted to have the opportunity to welcome you all to our superb celebratory occasion in the magnificent surrounds of Dublin Castle.

Our celebration today brings together our volunteers, our members, our rescue heroes and a multitude of groups and supporting stakeholders throughout the country who work diligently to provide water safety services to our families, our friends and our communities. I want to especially take this opportunity to thank the invaluable contribution from our volunteers. Today we honour our long service recipients who between them have given over 2,500 amazing years of voluntary commitment to water safety through their Water Safety Area Committees and the Community Rescue Boats Ireland. We will also honour our remarkable rescuers with our SEIKO "Just in Time" and Rescue Appreciation awards. Your brave and rapid responses saved many lives and provided immense solace to many families. Other most notable awards include our prestigious volunteer of the year and community and social responsibility recipients, and we honour our superb memorial award recipients. Also, today we mark our magnificent Sports Persons and Sports Volunteer of the Year awards and deliver our Media Appreciation awards.

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.

Together we have decreased our drownings by almost 17%, with 588 in total from 2017 to 2021 compared to 706 in total from 2012 to 2016. In July this year, we launched our National Drowning Report. This report marks a new step in our data driven insights and strategies. Using current data and future analysis, we can identify and focus our efforts on targeting at-risk groups for drowning.

By analysing trends and patterns we can develop targeted interventions, allocate resources efficiently and implement education and awareness programs aimed at those most vulnerable. We will always remember those who have tragically lost their lives to drowning and we commit to honouring their memory through increased awareness and increased safety efforts. I look forward to leading the organisation to bring our drowning rates down further.

Go raibh maith agaibh go léir.

Ag obair le Chéile.

Joanne Walsh

Joanne Walsh, CEO Water Safey Ireland.

A Note from Anne Rabbitte T.D., Minister of State

at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth with special responsibility for Disabilities

"It is an honour to pay tribute to the courageous and deserving award recipients being recognised at Water Safety Ireland's National Awards Ceremony. I want to commend the valiant efforts of these individuals who save others from drowning and to also pay tribute to the ongoing work of Water Safety Ireland volunteers who teach swimming and water rescue skills."

I know that among the other recipients to receive awards, are 136 volunteers who will be presented with Long-Service Volunteer Awards, recognising a combined total of 2,535 years of personal voluntary service teaching swimming, water rescue and survival skills in communities nationwide. That is a remarkable achievement and I want to commend every volunteer who devotes their spare time to making our waters safer.

On my personal behalf and on behalf of the Government, I want to thank every member of Water Safety Ireland for your work. Thanks to Water Safety Ireland, communities around the country are enriched with individuals who can enjoy our wonderful waterways safely."

Minister Anne Rabbitte, T.D.

This moment
Made Possible
by Water Safety
Swim within your depth,
parallel to shore.
Enjoy the water safely.
Learn more at watersafety.ie
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland
SÁBHÁILTEACHT UISCE NA hÉIREANN
WATER SAFETY IRELAND

Press Release

Nineteen lives saved from drowning.
Water Safety Ireland honours remarkable rescuers.

National Awards Ceremony 2024

Hibernia Conference Centre, Dublin Castle
Thursday, 3rd October 2024, 2pm – 4pm

Nineteen lives were saved from drowning by rescuers who will receive recognition at Water Safety Ireland's National Annual Awards Ceremony at The Hibernia Conference Centre, Dublin Castle on Thursday 3rd October, 2pm – 4pm.

Anne Rabbitte T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth will acknowledge thirty-two recipients of the 'Seiko Just in Time Award' and rescue appreciation awards for saving nineteen lives at risk of drowning. "It is an honour to pay tribute to the courageous and deserving award recipients being recognised at Water Safety Ireland's National Awards Ceremony. I want to commend the valiant efforts of these individuals who saved others from drowning and to also pay tribute to the ongoing work of Water Safety Ireland volunteers who teach swimming and water rescue skills."

"I know that among the other recipients to receive awards, are 136 volunteers who will be presented with Long-Service Volunteer Awards, recognising a combined total of 2,535 years of personal voluntary service teaching swimming, water rescue and survival skills in communities nationwide. That is a remarkable achievement and I want to commend every volunteer who devotes their spare time to making our waters safer."

Water Safety Ireland CEO Joanne Walsh stated:

"We all know that safety is a small investment required for the delivery of a rich future and in order to make this happen we need everyone to be water safety aware and water safety conscious. 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

Media Enquiries to:

Water Safety Ireland, The Long Walk, Galway. Tel: 091-564400; info@watersafety.ie

Joanne Walsh, 087-199.0339 / joannewalsh@watersafety.ie

Roger Sweeney, 087-678.9601 / rogersweeney@watersafety.ie

Paul McGowan, 087-166.7103 / paulmcgowan@watersafety.ie

Community and Social Responsibility Awards

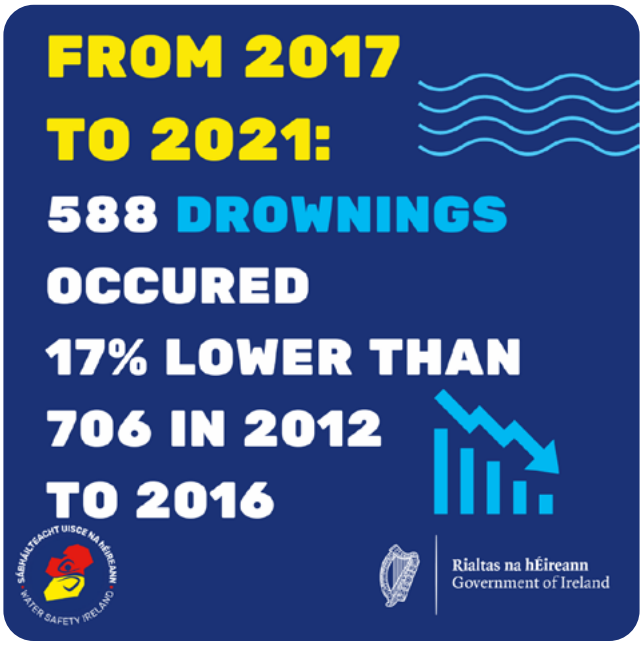
In recognition of the support given to Water Safety Ireland's community work, charitable activities and commitment to drowning prevention initiatives and the reduction of aquatic related injuries.

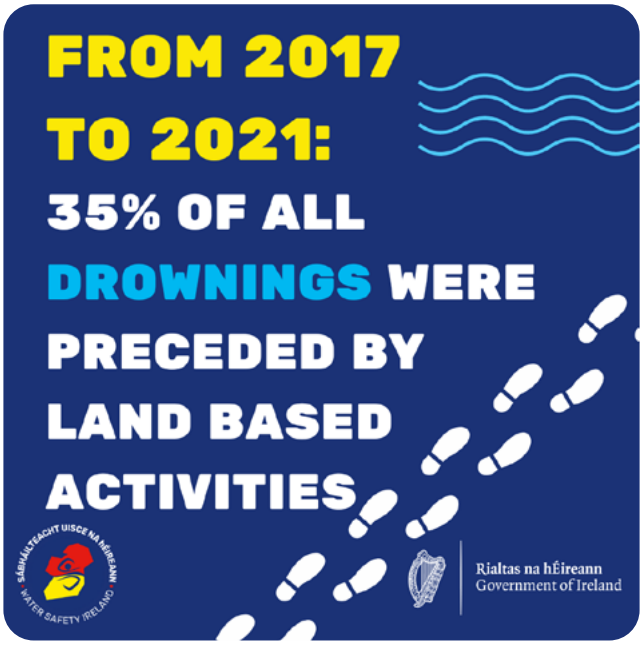
Timemark

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.

Conrad Wynne, OxygenCare

On World Drowning Prevention Day, Conrad Wynne, Senior Product Specialist with Oxygen-Care presented a DefibTech LIFELINE AED to Water Safety Ireland, in recognition of WSI's work over decades in providing and promoting lifesaving skills including CPR and the use and deployment of AEDs which has contributed greatly to the number of lives saved in Ireland. OxygenCare , an Irish owned family business, now in it's third generation of Moran Family management, have recently taken over as the new official importer for DefibTech in Ireland and are contributing to saving by lives by improving access to Defibrillators from their Wicklow base and through selected distributors across the country. Thank you OxygenCare for marking World Drowning Prevention Day with an AED that will bring peace of mind to hundreds of lifesavers and their parents during Lifesaving competitions nationwide.





Media Appreciation Awards

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

National Radio Broadcaster: Claire Byrne, Today with Claire Byrne, RTÉ

We are grateful to Claire Byrne RTÉ for highlighting water safety issues on her Show "Today with Claire Byrne" on RTÉ Radio 1.
This included liaising with Water Safety Ireland directly to deliver important water safety messages to the public and children across Ireland to help change attitudes and behaviours around water. Well done Claire and the team at RTÉ radio One.

Local Radio Station Award: Teresa O'Malley, Mid-West Radio

Mid-West Radio is broadcasting since 1989 with a focus on local news, current affairs, sports and music. Through promoting water safety awareness, they have been instrumental in protecting lives and educating the public on the importance of safe water practices. Thank you, Mid-West Radio.

National TV Broadcaster: RTÉ News, Laura Fletcher

Every summer, hundreds of thousands of people are attracted to Ireland's waterways nationwide. Many of those taking to our wonderful aquatic environments have very little experience of the dangers of open water. We are grateful to Laura Fletcher at RTÉ Six-One News for helping us to raise awareness and to change attitudes and behaviours around water.

Provincial Press Award: Adam Walsh, Editor, The Longford Leader

The Longford Leader, founded in 1897 is a weekly newspaper which contains a mix of the latest local and national news, sports, features and opinion pieces, as well as providing a successful online offering to its readers. It has promoted many of Water Safety Ireland's safety messages and warnings to the public. Thank you to the Longford Leader for raising awareness of water safety and drowning prevention.

National Press Award: Larissa Nolan, The Irish Daily Mirror

The Irish Daily Mirror is an Irish daily newspaper launched in 1997. Their printed and digital editions have covered many topical water safety issues throughout the year, including Water Safety Ireland's Drowning Report and bank holiday weekend water safety warnings and a full-page article by journalist Larissa Nolan about World Drowning Prevention Day and the need for a cultural change to attitudes about water safety In Ireland. We are truly grateful for this support which keeps water safety in the public consciousness all year round.

Online Broadcasting: Lorna Siggins, Journalist & Author

Lorna Siggins is an award-winning print and radio reporter, former Irish Times western correspondent, and the author of books including "Search and Rescue: True Stories of Irish-Air Sea Rescue and the Loss of R116". She is currently a contributor to The Sunday Times, The Irish Independent, The Irish Examiner, Afloat, The Skipper and to RTE Radio 1 Seascapes, and Countrywide. Lorna has covered many water safety issues that have appeared in various publications including Afloat which is one of Ireland's leading digital news websites for those involved in water-based activities. Her efforts to raise public awareness has played a vital role in preventing accidents and we thank her for her continued support and dedication to keeping our communities safe around water.

SEIKO Just In Time Awards and Rescue Appreciation Awards

Kindly sponsored by SEIKO, these awards recognise courageous rescue interventions to assist persons in immediate danger in the water. Congratulations to all 32 rescuers for helping to save 19 lives in the following 16 incidents.

1. **Garda Peter McGee (JIT), Co. Donegal**

   On Tuesday 30th November 2021, Garda McGee observed a female in distress in the water at Port Bridge, Letterkenny. Without hesitation, Garda McGee entered the water and swam towards the female. The water was quite deep, the tide was coming in and the current was strong. He managed to grab onto the woman and bring her over towards the riverbank. He held on valiantly to the wall of one of the arches of the bridge until a ringbuoy was thrown to him. He used the ringbuoy to bring the woman back to the edge and up onto the embankment to safety. She was taken to hospital where she made a full recovery. The swift and brave actions of Garda Peter McGee undoubtedly prevented the loss of life. Well done Peter.

2. **Darragh Cullivan (JIT), Paul Cullivan (JIT), Meabh Murray (RA), Co. Dublin**

   On Monday 7th of August 2023, Darragh and Paul were alerted to a commotion down at the shore of Inis Oirr beach, county Galway. They observed a woman face down in the water. Without hesitation, both entered the water and swam out to the woman. Upon reaching her, they realised that she was unresponsive. They immediately began rescue breaths on her while in the water. They managed to bring her to the shore and commenced CPR. They also called out for an AED and an ambulance.

   They moved the woman up to dry sand and restarted CPR. After a period, they noticed a pulse. At that point they continued to support her breathing until a doctor arrived with equipment to help. They remained with her and continued to support and monitor. She slowly regained consciousness. Meabh Murray who was with both Darragh and Paul, organised for the beach to be cleared for the helicopter to land safely. Thanks to the swift and brave actions of Meabh Murray, Darragh and Paul Cullivan the woman recovered and tragedy was averted. Well done Darragh, Paul and Meadbh.

3. **Michael Walsh (JIT), Amy Walsh (RA), Co. Cork**

   On a Thursday evening in February 2021, a woman got into difficulty while swimming at Dunworley beach. She was pushed by the turbulent tide into a blowhole where she became trapped and as the tide closed in she could not see anything as visibility was very poor. Michael and his mother Amy were out walking, when Amy noticed clothing and a phone near the waterline of the beach. They observed the beach from the slipway and they could not see anyone in the water. As a precaution, they decided to make their way

over to a rocky area to ensure that there was nobody in difficulty. Amy proceeded to yell into the blowhole, and they could hear a cry for help.

Michael immediately obtained a ringbuoy that was located beside the blowhole. He climbed into the blowhole and threw the ringbuoy towards the woman. Thankfully, she managed to grab hold of the ringbuoy. Meanwhile, Amy went to her car and obtained a lifejacket. She passed this onto Michael who managed to successfully throw the lifejacket to the woman. Michael held onto the rope of the ringbuoy for over fifteen minutes until emergency services arrived. They took over and successfully brought the woman to safety. The woman made a full recovery.Well done Amy and Michael.

4. Paul Jackson (JIT), Co.Dublin

On the 23rd of September 1955, then 3-year-old Richard Clarke was playing with his 5-year-old cousin, when he fell into the water at Binn's bridge, Royal Canal. His cousin sought help from ESB employees who were laying cable nearby. They rushed to the boy's aid. One of them made an unsuccessful effort to help Richard out of the water. Paul Jackson, then 14 entered the water and successfully brought Richard onto the bank to safety. The ESB employees revived the boy, and he was taken to hospital where he made a full recovery. Well done Paul.

5. Carlos Amaya (JIT), Aaron O Callaghan (JIT), Co. Cork

On the 18th of March 2024, at Garrettstown beach, Carlos had just reached his van after teaching a surf lesson when he heard shouting for help. He spotted a family in distress in the water. A woman was standing on rocks in the water, shouting at 3 members of her family, who were further out to sea and being pulled outwards by a rip current.

Carlos immediately grabbed his surfboard and ran towards the water. Another surfer Aaron, who was already in the water was also making his way towards those in distress. By the time they reached the three people, they were approximately 200 metres from shore. Carlos focused on rescuing the two children with the aid of his surfboard and managed to bring them safely to the shore. Aaron assisted the father of the children who had become exhausted and brought him safely to shore. All three made a full recovery.

The swift and brave actions of both Carlos and Aaron undoubtedly prevented the loss of life and for this we thank them for their efforts.

6. Gardai, Stephen Murray (RA), Joshua Lancaster (RA), Sonia Buggy (JIT), Lorcan Cowen (RA) and Senan Farrell (RA), Co. Dublin

On Sunday evening, the 11th of August 2024, members of the Gardai Sonia Buggy, Joshua Lancaster, Stephen Murray, Senan Farrell and Lorcan Cowen attended the scene of an incident at Memorial Bridge, Dublin 1. When Gardaí arrived at the scene they observed a male in difficulty in the River Liffey off the Memorial bridge. He was being quickly carried downstream by a strong current.

Gardai Stephen Murray and Garda Joshua Lancaster grabbed a ringbuoy each. Garda Lorcan Cowen also grabbed a third ringbuoy. They attempted to intercept the male as he was being brought down the river by the current. Garda Sonia Buggy went down a ladder and entered the water. At this point the male had submerged under the water numerous times and was exhausted from trying to stay afloat. Thankfully the man grabbed hold of a ringbuoy and Garda Buggy entered the river with another ringbuoy. She successfully brought the male over to the ladder and held onto him. He lost consciousness, so Garda Buggy put the man on his back and opened his airway. After a time, he regained consciousness, and the Gardaí were able to encourage him to climb up the ladder with assistance. He was taken to hospital and made a full recovery.

Well done to all involved as your swift and brave actions undoubtedly prevented the loss of life. Thank you.

7. Gardaí Coleman Curran (JIT), Garda Brendan Murphy (JIT), Co. Kildare

On Saturday the 3rd of August 2024, Gardaí in Athy, Kildare were notified of a woman in distress in the River Barrow. Gardaí Coleman Curran and Brendan Murphy ran to the scene, and Garda Curran entered the water and brought the woman to safety with the assistance of Garda Murphy.

The woman re-entered the water and was carried downstream by the current. Garda Curran re-entered the water, caught up with her and held onto her while Garda Murphy threw a ringbuoy to Garda Curran. Garda Murphy successfully pulled both Garda Curran and the female to safety and she made a full recovery.

Well done Coleman and Brendan for helping this woman in distress.

8. Gardai Hayden Drew (JIT) & Brian Burns (JIT), Co. Wexford

On the 11th of November 2023, Gardai Hayden Drew & Brian Burns received a call regarding a male in distress in the River at Ferrybank in Wexford.

The speed of the current, the cold temperature of the water and the slippery condition of the slipway raised serious concerns for the Gardai. Following a quick assessment of the situation, both Gardai entered the water just above waist level, and managed to reach the man and take him to safety. He made a full recovery. Thanks Hayden and Brian for your brave selfless actions to help save this man from drowning. Well done.

9. Garda Keith Conlon (JIT), Garda Deirdre Connolly (JIT), Garda Tara McGrory (RA), Co. Donegal

On the 17th of September 2023, Gardai Keith Conlon, Deirdre Connelly and Tara McGrory arrived at Lough Swilly in Buncranna, they were a group of people said that there was a man in difficulty somewhere in the water but it was dark and visibility was poor. Gardai Conlon and Connolly waded into the water for 400 meters, making their way in the general direction of the person in distress. They continued to call out while Garda McGrory shone her torch in their direction from shore.

They eventually located the male who was on a sandbar. They reassured him and eventually managed to bring him safely to shore. He made a full recovery. Well done Keith, Deirdre and Tara for your teamwork that saved this man at risk of drowning in darkness.

10. Michael Breen (JIT), Co. Sligo

On the 27th of September 2023, Michael was out walking his dog at Enniscrone beach. He spotted a woman lying face down in the water. Michael ran down onto the beach and entered the water. He managed to grab hold of the woman and bring her safely to shore. Emergency services arrived at the scene and took over. She made a full recovery. Well done Michael for quickly taking action to save this woman's life.

11. Rohan Debeny Bazeley (RA), Yanto Carrothers (RA), Donegal

On the evening of the 18th of May 2024, at Portnablagh pier, both Rohan and Yanto heard yelling down at the pier. They observed Gardai arriving at the scene. They grabbed kayaks, entered the water and paddled quickly towards a woman in distress. Upon reaching the woman, they noticed she was afloat and holding onto something by the pier. Gardai had managed to grab a hold of the female and both students remained in the water with her until she was safely pulled onto the pier to safety by members of the Gardai. She made a

full recovery. Well done Rohan and Yanto for helping to secure a positive outcome.

12. Thomas Shaw Hamilton (JIT), Co. Waterford

On the 6th of June 2024, two young teenagers were swimming on Clonea Strand in Waterford. Thomas happened to be on the beach when he noticed the two boys suddenly getting into difficulty. He could see that they were caught in a rip current.

He immediately entered the water. The rip current was very strong. It took him 10 minutes to swim out to them. Upon reaching the boys, he calmed them down by verbally reassuring them. Thomas was wearing a lifejacket at the time and was able to remove it and use it to keep all afloat. After about 15 minutes they managed to get back to the shoreline. Onlookers called emergency services, and both boys made a full recovery. Well done Thomas for taking swift action to save these two boys.

13. Michael Brennan (JIT), Wexford

On the 20th of August in 1982, at Fethard-On-Sea, Michael was alerted to a man and a boy in difficulty in the water. He immediately swam out towards them. The water was very deep, and they were far from the shoreline. Michael managed to reach both and began helping them to swim towards the shore while calling for help to people on the beach. Michael managed to bring the boy safely back to shore where he made a full recovery. Well done Michael for your brave actions that saved this young boy's life.

14. Garda Michelle Conway (JIT), Garda Daniel O Callaghan, (JIT), Co. Cork

On the 1st of January 2024, Gardai Conway and O'Callaghan observed a vehicle entering the sea at Gobby beach, Ringaskiddy. Visibility was poor and after assessing the scene and calling for assistance, both Gardai entered the water and waded out to the vehicle where the driver was having difficulty getting out. Both Gardai broke the window of the car and managed to pull the driver out of the vehicle and safely back to the shore. He made a full recovery. Well done Michelle and Daniel for helping to save this man's life.

15. Gardai JP Twomey, Alison O'Flynn, Richard Casey, Co. Cork

On the 1st of January 2024, Gardai Twomey, O'Flynn & Casey became alerted to a woman in distress in the water near Brian Boru bridge on the River Lee. Gardai Casey grabbed a ringbuoy and threw it in the direction of the person while Garda Twomey descended a ladder with a second ringbuoy and managed to pass it to the woman. Both Garda Casey and O Flynn controlled the ringbuoy ropes while Garda Twomey reassured the person who was unable to exit the water. They remained with her until the fire brigade unit arrived at the scene and removed her from the water. She made a full recovery. Well done JP, Alison and Richard for working together to save this woman from drowning.

16. John Sweeney (JIT), Father David Sweeney, Co. Dublin

On the night of the 19th of June this year, while on holidays in Spain, a young boy with additional needs left the bedroom he was sharing with his father and managed to make his way to the swimming pool. He entered the water which was approximately 1.2 metres deep. A woman noticed the boy was in difficulty and called out to her son for help. Her son John quickly entered the pool and managed to reach the boy and pull him back to safety, where he was reunited with his relieved father.

Well done John for taking action so quickly and turning a potential tragedy into a positive outcome.

THIS MOMENT
MADE
POSSIBLE
BY
WATER
SAFETY
Always wear a correctly fitted lifejacket with a crotch strap.
Enjoy the water safely.
Learn more at watersafety.ie
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland
SÁBHÁILTEACHT UISCE NA hÉIREANN
WATER SAFETY IRELAND

Leon Quinlan Perpetual Award

Awarded to: Mother of Divine Grace Primary School, Ballygall, Dublin

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. Mother of Divine Grace Primary School, located in Ballygall, Dublin has shown such great commitment and enthusiasm in 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

Awarded to: Spraoi Playgroup, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare

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. The programme teaches young children how to stay safe in a variety of aquatic environments. This year we would like to congratulate Spraoi Playgroup, Miltown Malbay Co.Clare for their keen interest and enthusiasm in teaching the Hold Hands programme, well done!

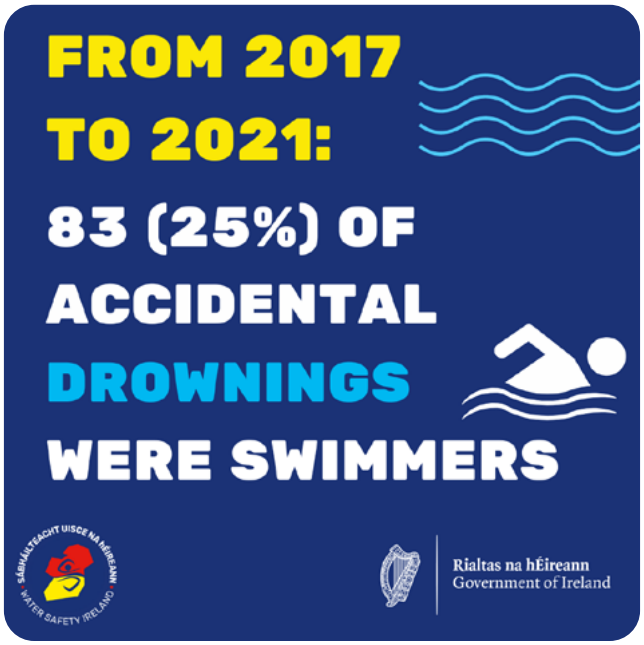
Sports Volunteer of the Year Award

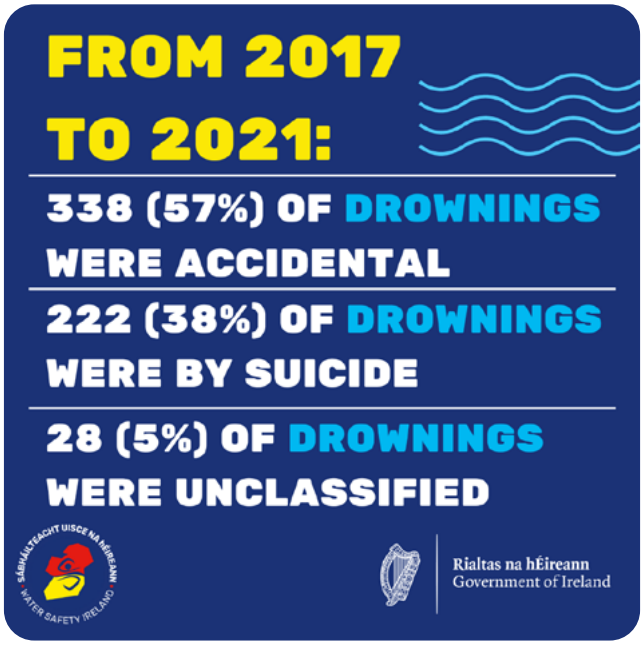
Alison Deane, Co. Clare

Alison Deane's involvement in Lifesaving Sport began over a decade ago, initially as a supportive parent when her children excelled as competitors. Her passion for the sport quickly grew, and she became an expert "meet manager," playing a key role in regional and national competitions by managing entries, recording, and publishing results. Alison's dedication deepened when her daughter joined the National Squad, leading her to take on the role of National Squad Administrator, where she continues to excel, even after her daughters have stopped competing.

Known for her professionalism and efficiency, Alison expertly manages all squad communications, staying closely connected with athletes and assisting with squad camps. In 2018, she was instrumental in the success of the European Junior Championships, hosted in Limerick and Kilkee, leveraging her hospitality and competition management skills to ensure the event's smooth execution.

In 2022, Alison joined the Sport Commission while continuing her demanding role as squad administrator. Her commitment to the sport is unwavering, spending countless hours at the beach and pool, ensuring every detail of competitions, from entries to results, is handled seamlessly. Alison's tireless contributions make her a deserving recipient of the Water Safety Ireland Sports Volunteer of the Year award.





Sports Persons of the Year Award

Oisin O'Grady, Co. Clare

Oisín O'Grady, a standout athlete from Co. Clare, has made an extraordinary impact on the world of lifesaving this year. His exceptional talent earned him a place on the Junior National Team for the World Lifesaving Championships in Australia. Nationally Oisin has also competed fiercely in both the Junior and Senior categories.

As a key member of Ireland's Junior team, Oisín played an integral role in their outstanding performance, securing a 7th place finish among 30+ nations. He also returned home with a coveted bronze medal from the Tube Rescue event. Oisín's individual accomplishments are equally impressive, setting five national records and reaching both A and B Finals at the World Championships.

Oisín's success and continuous setting of National records each year, reflects his relentless dedication to the sport, built through years of intense training and commitment. His teamwork and dedication to the National Training Squad and National Team programs have further cemented his place as one of Ireland's top lifesaving athletes. His achievements this year make him a truly deserving recipient of the Sports Person of the Year award.

Aisling Barry, Co. Cork

Aisling Barry, a standout athlete from Co. Cork, has solidified her place as one of Ireland's top lifesaving competitors. Earning a spot on the Senior National Team, she travelled to Australia in August for the World Lifesaving Championships, where her leadership qualities shone brightly. For the second consecutive year, Aisling was named Female Captain of the team, a testament to the high regard in which she is held by the coaching staff.

Competing against world-class athletes, Aisling showcased her determination and skill, delivering exceptional performances. As a key member of the SERC (Simulated Emergency Response Competition) team, she helped secure a bronze medal, contributing significantly to Ireland's overall success.

Her achievements extend beyond the international arena, as Aisling continues to excel in national competitions also with a number national records to her name, demonstrating the results of her unwavering dedication and rigorous training. Aisling's accomplishments are a testament to her remarkable talent and commitment to lifesaving, making her a well-deserved recipient of the Sports Person of the Year award.

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.

10 YEARS CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
(CRBI = Community Rescue Boats Ireland)

Anthony O Connor	Mayo	Jon Cruwys	Mallow Search & Rescue
Aoife Byrne	Kildare	Lauren Cawley	Sligo
Aoife Mooney	Bonmahon CRBI	Martin Hoy	Mallow Search & Rescue
Bernie Gavin	Mayo	Martin Morrissey	Bonmahon CRBI
Billy Crowley	Bonmahon CRBI	Martin O Mahoney	Bonmahon CRBI
Brian Fitzgerald	Waterford Marine S&R	Maurice Quinlan	Mallow Search & Rescue
Caitriona Moroney	Longford	Òlivia Stundon	Lim City
Christopher Nicholson	Sligo	Orla Finnegan	Cavan
Ciaran Riordan	Dublin	Paul McDonnell	Ballybunion CRBI
Colette Sweeney	Mayo	Rebecca McGrory	Dublin
Connor Stephenson	Wexford	Seamus O Reilly	Bonmahon CRBI
Denise Toland	Mayo	Sharon Walsh S&R	Waterford Marine
Garry Kavanagh	Ballybunion CRBI	Stephen Smyth	Mayo
Gerry Keohane	Mallow Search & Rescue	Tom Burtchell	Waterford Marine S&R
Graham Sheehan & Rescue	Mallow Search	Ursula O Shea	Kerry
Isabella O Mahony	Ballybunion CRBI	Veronica Hunter	Sligo
Jamie Blanche	Waterford Marine S&R		

15 YEAR SERVICE - MEDAL OF HONOUR

Aine O Sullivan	Cork	Gavin Walsh	Mallow Search & Rescue
Charlotte Byrne	Wexford	Graham Kerr	Cork
Darina Halpenny	Dublin	Keith Scanlon	Dublin
Darryl Barry S&R	Waterford Marine	Leanne Bryan	Wexford
David O'Donaghue	Mallow Search & Rescue	Marie Nolan	Cork
Declan Barry	Waterford Marine Search & Rescue	Rebecca Farr	Cork
Donal Gleeson	Mallow Search & Rescue	Ronan Looney	Mallow Search & Rescue
Edel McCarthy	Dublin	Sharon Staunton	Mayo
Emmet Lynch	Ballybunion CRBI	Valerie Stundon	Limerick City
Emmet Murphy	Mallow Search & Rescue		

20 YEARS OF SERVICE - BRONZE BAR

Barry Robinson	Mayo	Maebh Uí Ainiféin	Kerry
Brian Mannion	Ballybunion CRBI	Marian Kelly	Kerry
Bruno Segondat	Mallow Search & Rescue	Martin O'Sullivan	Mallow Search & Rescue
Chris Reilly	Ballybunion CRBI	Mary Wrafter	Defence Forces
Chris O Sullivan	Ballybunion CRBI	Niamh Cullinane	Kerry
Denise Collins	Kerry	Noelle O Leary	Cork
Emer Doyle	Wexford	Omar Fitzell	Ballybunion CRBI
Geraldine McMahon	Kerry	Orla Donnelly	Mayo
Grave Flahive	Ballybunion CRBI	Orla Roche O Connor	Mayo
Greg Clifford	Mallow Search & Rescue	Philip Johnson	Mallow Search & Rescue
Ian Kelleher	Mallow Search & Rescue	PJ O Gorman	Ballybunion CRBI
Jane Campbell	Kerry	Siobhán Bradley	Cork
John Williams	Cork	Stephen Cullinane	Kerry
Lindsay Stevens	Dublin	Tara O Connor	Kerry

30 YEARS OF SERVICE - SILVER BAR

Aine Stafford	Wexford	John Goggin	Mallow Search & Rescue
Anthony Nolan	Carlow	John McGrory	Dublin
Ben Kennedy	Dublin	John Paul Merrit	Mallow Search & Rescue
Dennis Merrit	Mallow Search & Rescue	Mike Ryan	Ballybunion CRBI
Diarmuid Ó Donnabháin	Cork	Noreen O Connor	Mayo
Fergal Wickham	Dublin	Pauline Jordan	Mayo
Fiona Ni Dhuinní	Cork	Ronan Kelly	Dublin
Gearoid O'Connor	Ballybunion CRBI	Terry Logan	Limerick Search and Rescue
Hilary Lynch	Cork	Zena Ryan	Ballybunion CRBI
Ian Smith	Wicklow		

40 YEARS OF SERVICE - GOLD BAR

Bernard Glavin	Mallow Search & Rescue	John Woulfe	Mallow Search & Rescue
Colette Allen	Wexford	Kieran Horgan	Mallow Search & Rescue
Elizabeth Mc Caul	Cavan	Nikki Dowdall	Wexford
Gary Smyth	Mayo	Seamus Maher	Carlow
John Reilly	Cavan		

50 YEARS GOLD SERVICE - MEDAL OF HONOUR

Bronagh Stafford	Wexford

Volunteer of the Year Award

Recipient: Marcus Choo, Co. Sligo

Marcus has been involved with Sligo WSAC for ten years. He has taken on many roles, most notably, the role of Sligo Committee Chair and Sports Development Officer for Sligo Surf Lifesaving Club.

Marcus has proven to be a focused and diligent volunteer, he is a man dedicated to promoting water safety in the Sligo region.

Marcus's emphasis has always been on what is best for the child, and we can only hope his strong sense of decency and work ethic has inspired and motivated his fellow volunteers.

Marcus works full time and yet, sacrifices his free time, to commit to the work of Sligo Water Safety.

Marcus as a master Surf Lifesaving competitor, understands the sport, and brings a knowledge of what is involved in competing through to the younger members. He has a talent for including fun and humour in the serious preparation for competitions, essential qualities to have when coaching and teaching children.

Marcus always has a smile and a joke but is a modest man at heart.

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 118 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.

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

If you see someone in distress, these simple steps may save a life:

1 **SHOUT**
to encourage and guide the person to shore.

2 **REACH**
out with a long object such as a branch or a piece of clothing but do not enter the water.

3 **THROW**
a ringbuoy or any floating object and call 112 for the coast guard.

SÁBHÁILTEACHT UISCE NA hÉIREANN • WATER SAFETY IRELAND •

WATER SAFETY IRELAND
The Long Walk, Galway, H91 F602
Tel: +353 (0) 91 564 400 | INFO@WATERSAFETY.IE
RCN: 20206593