

DECEMBER 2012: WAIHI BEACH SLSC



NATIONAL WINNER



RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

Date/time: 14:00 Saturday 29 December 2012
Location: Bowentown, Waihi Beach
Lifeguards involved: William White (Junior Surf member) and Sergio Schuler (non-member)

In it for life

A pair of 12 year-old boys didn't think twice about going to the aid of a man caught in a rip during their Christmas holidays.

On December 29, a 32 year-old male got into difficulty while pulling a crab net along the beach near Bowentown, Waihi Beach. He had been swept out in a rip to around 60-80 meters off-shore beyond the breakers where he had been treading water for around five to 10 minutes. The sea conditions were rough with a 1.5 meter swell on an outgoing tide.

Further along the beach William White, along with his cousin Sergio Schuler, had spotted the man in difficulty with his hand raised in the air. They didn't hesitate to run into the water and swim out to the man who was struggling to stay upright and was taking in a large amount of water.

The boys managed to bring the man to shore using a combination of physical

force and verbal encouragement for a period of around 10 minutes. The man, at times, dragged the boys under water in panic but despite that, the boys continued to assist him.

Sergio then swam back to shore to raise the alarm with his mother who was further up the beach. Will continued to assist the man until Sergio swam back to help him bring the man ashore, together dragging him up the beach.

A female member of the public then rolled the man into the recovery position and monitored him until an ambulance and the police arrived. The man was taken to Waikato Hospital where he remained in ED overnight and was then released the next day.

It is with no doubt that these two 12 year-old boys saved this man's life. He was treated for shock, water

on the lungs and partial hypothermia. At over 100kgs, the man was double that in weight of the two boys yet they managed to bring him safely to shore.

Will showed excellent leadership by sending Sergio back to raise the alarm. He is an active junior member of the Waihi Beach Surf Life Saving Club and Nippers Programme. His mother Nicole and sister Grace are both active Lifeguards at the clubs.

Photo by: Christine Cornege

