

JANUARY 2016: OREWA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB



SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW ZEALAND



RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

NORTHERN WINNER

In it for life

Date: 16 January 2016

Location: Wenderholm Estuary

Lifeguards involved: Shanae Johnston, Aoife King, Levi Ata, Xander Cuff, John Chapman, Chris Dunn, Julia Marsh, Ella Taylor, Alice Friend

Four young patrol members were conducting a mobile patrol near the estuary at the northern end of Wenderholm while returning from lunch when a passing boat alerted them to persons in trouble.

Two swimmers, a 53 year-old male and his 10 year-old son, were struggling against the outgoing tide. The son couldn't swim and the father was trying to hold him above the water while also trying to keep himself afloat.

Without hesitation, the girls swam to their aid. Two swam the young boy back to shore, against the tide, while the other two worked together to swim the father back to the beach. This was done without the aid of a rescue tubes or fins.

The four girls worked together to move the two patients away from the water's edge to begin a primary survey. Neither patient spoke English.

The boy was able to walk once he reached the beach and was not showing any visible signs of fatigue or water inhalation. The father was exhausted, could not stand and was placed on the beach in the recovery position.

Shanae and Alice remained with the father and son while Ella and Aoife ran back to the Wenderholm base to alert the Patrol Captain (PC) Chris Dunn. They gathered the necessary equipment, defibrillator and radio and went to the patient.

Chris quickly attached a heart rate monitor, blood pressure cuff and Pulse Oximetre to the patient. By this time, he had been out of the water for close to 10 minutes but was breathing very rapidly with a high heart rate over 160 bpm. The Pulse Oximetre showed low oxygen saturation, so oxygen was quickly administered.

The PC suspected water inhalation due to shallow breathing and elevated heart rate, so he set up an oxygen bottle and mask and fitted it to the patient. Another patrol member relayed the information back to the Vice Patrol Captain (VPC) John Chapman at Wenderholm who informed SurfCom of the situation and an ambulance was called.

Within five minutes of administering oxygen, the patient began to expel the water he had ingested. Due to the location, the patient had to be transferred to a spinal board and carried around one kilometre to the road to meet the ambulance. Six patrol members took turns to carry the patient and the oxygen bottle until they reached a point where the ranger could provide assistance with an ATV.

From the time Chris arrived on the scene until the patient was handed over to St John, he and John maintained regular radio contact, giving five minute updates which were relayed to SurfCom.

Eventually, the patient's breathing and heart rate slowed to a comfortable rate and oxygen saturation returned to a normal level. He was exhausted and didn't open his eyes or speak during the rescue. He was handed over to St John who transported him to North Shore Hospital.