



THE CHARITY SAVING LIVES AT SEA



Coastguard Supporter Newsletter | Christmas 2022

THE RIGBY FAMILY,

**SAVING LIVES AT SEA
THANKS TO YOU!**

The Rigby family - Jade, Grant and Ethan, risking their own lives to save others.

Every moment spent out on the water is special to the Rigby family. Because 24 years ago they almost lost each other forever. A traumatic experience, and the reason Grant Rigby, his son Ethan and daughter Jade are now Coastguard Manawatu volunteers.

To this day, Grant is still haunted by the screams of his sons Ethan and Liam who were six and eight at the time.

Out fishing on a friend's boat, Grant, Ethan and Liam had a great day out on the water. When it was time to head home across the bar, the skipper had a problem. He'd lost his prescription glasses and couldn't see the bar to head back in.

With the help of the skipper, Grant drove the boat across the bar and let Coastguard know they were about to cross. Thinking they were on course for the channel, they hit the bar and a wave flipped the boat. Everything went pear-shaped so quickly.

Grant and his boys were trapped underneath the overturned boat. Panic set in. There was a small air pocket but it was full of fishing gear, jandals and ropes that kept rolling around with the waves. As the waves pounded the boat, the air pocket filled with water, coming and going. They held their breath, as one minute it was there, the next it was gone.

All wearing lifejackets, they floated underneath the hull.

Trying to save his sons, Grant grabbed Ethan's arm and dove down the side of the boat to get out. But he lost his grip of Ethan and popped out without him. Ethan was still trapped with his brother.

Continues inside...

***The calming voice at the
end of the line...***



*Meet cool, calm and collected Radio
Operator Linden. **SEE BACK PAGE***

THE RIGBY FAMILY, SAVING LIVES AT SEA THANKS TO YOU!

Grant was terrified. He was desperate to save them. He could hear them screaming... a sound he has never forgotten and a feeling that sent chills through his body.

His worst nightmare was unfolding right in front of him.

Luckily, Coastguard were out training at the time and had two crew on board ready to help. Other boats also stopped. And the rescue began...

The boat had drifted to a shallow spot on the bar. So, everyone jumped in trying to lift the side of the boat to tip it over, but the suction was too strong. Eight-year-old Liam could see light at the bow so dove down to the hatch opening and made his way out.

Ethan was still trapped. Frantically banging on the hull, Grant kept reassuring him they were trying to get him out. Then suddenly, he went silent.

Grant recalls that

exact moment; "Words can't explain what I felt, I thought I had lost my son forever. A feeling that I still have to this day."

Thankfully, more boats passing by stopped to help and they managed to flip the boat over. Ethan was unconscious, still in the air pocket holding onto the steering wheel.

Coastguard skipper, Mike Hayes grabbed Ethan's lifeless body and started giving him mouth to mouth resuscitation. Emergency training that saved his life.

The Coastguard crew rushed them to the wharf where an ambulance and helicopter were waiting to take them to hospital.

“ Words can't explain what I felt, I thought I had lost my son forever. A feeling that I still have to this day. ”
Grant Rigby

From that day on Grant decided to volunteer with Coastguard. He wanted to learn as much as he could about water safety to help others in need. After 21 years of saving lives at sea he is now president of the Coastguard Manawatu unit.



FOLLOWING IN THEIR DAD'S FOOTSTEPS.

Now as Coastguard volunteers, both Ethan and Jade feel part of the true community spirit of Foxton.

And you have made this happen! Your donations make sure Coastguard volunteers like Grant, Ethan and Jade are trained and have the lifesaving equipment they need to save lives in their communities. Thank you for all your support!



Read Jade's story on the next page.

JADE STILL HAS HER DAD AND OLDER BROTHERS TO HUG BECAUSE OF YOU.

THIS IS HER STORY...

I can't describe in words how grateful I am to the crew for what they did that day. As a VERY close-knit family, I can't even imagine how our lives would have changed tragically if it wasn't for the heroes involved in the rescue.

I was five-years-old when Dad and my two older brothers capsized on the bar off Foxton beach. I was walking along the estuary with Mum and our dog Henry when someone ran up to tell her the news.

Mum dropped the dog leash and started running to the wharf. I remember seeing ambulances, police cars, a helicopter and loads of Coastguard crew there.

I saw Dad first, wrapped in a towel with a bleeding toe. I was so young at the time. I didn't understand what had happened until I saw my brothers being taken away by an ambulance.



As I got older and understood how severe the incident truly was, post-traumatic stress set in.

I never wanted to set foot on a boat again. I grew up on the water, but I was terrified of the boat flipping. My anxiety and emotions stopped me from enjoying the water. It took seven years before I felt confident on the river, but crossing the bar came a lot later in life.

When I moved to Foxton Beach in 2017, I saw my brother Ethan training as a Coastguard volunteer. I loved hearing about the rescues and wanted to stop someone else from losing their family like I almost did.

Joining Coastguard has healed my fears of the water. I'm now a very confident crew member, a strong swimmer and have no problems crossing the bar.

I want to say a really big thank you to all the people who support and donate to Coastguard. Without you we wouldn't have the resources and training to do what we do, and more people would lose their lives. You are helping us educate people, be there for those in need and do our absolute best to get people home safe.

Thank you for helping us save lives at sea, we couldn't do it without you.

Jade

CHRISTMAS WILL BE SPECIAL FOR THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE THIS YEAR, BECAUSE OF YOU!



Powered by almost 2,000 volunteers, Coastguard is the charity saving lives at sea. But did you know we are only 34% central government funded?

That's why your donations are so powerful and make a lifesaving difference. We need to raise over \$17 million to be there for Kiwi's when they need us most. And you are helping us on our mission.

We have boats on the water, aircrafts in the sky and crews trained and ready to save lives at sea thanks to you.

Coastguard volunteers show up no matter what, and your donations make it happen. Thank you!



4,728 radio calls received each week



63 incidents attended each week



7,939 people helped home to safety last year



261,000 volunteer hours last year



IMAGINE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU WEREN'T THERE.

Cool, calm and collected Linden Rose, is one of the many Coastguard Radio Operators that answers over 245,000 radio calls each year. Calls that are answered and lives saved because of you and your donations.

Linden often hears the panic and desperation in people's voices. Going above and beyond for every rescue, he provides comfort and reassurance that help is on its way.

A couple were out on their jetski when things suddenly took a turn for the worst. Calling Coastguard in sheer panic, Linden took the call... "We're sinking between Omaha and Little Barrier and our jetski is filling with

water, we can feel it and our engine has stopped working."

Linden got to work. "The jetskier was pretty worked up and stressed out, but we were able to get a good GPS position from his jetski. And they had lifejackets on and a working EPIRB with them," remembers Linden.

Trying to calm their nerves Linden spent an hour on the phone with them. A few boats were in the area so he told them how they could attract their attention

and what to do if they ended up in the water.

"When you answer a call, they're usually going a million miles a minute in desperation. From there I usually ask them questions and give them a task to focus on. I find it helps to get control of the conversation and understand exactly what's happening," Linden says.

Coastguard Kawau arrived and towed them back to shore, all safe and well.



COASTGUARD RADIO OPERATORS ARE THE LIFELINE OF ANY RESCUE.

Without you and your donations, radio calls would go unanswered and lives would be lost. You might not see them, but they are first on the scene, behind the scenes. They are the calming voice on the end of the line saving lives and you are right there beside them.

Thank you.

HEARTFELT THANKS FOR HELPING OUR HEROES SAVE LIVES AT SEA!

Royal New Zealand Coastguard Inc is the charity saving lives at sea

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Ngā mihi nui to our valued partners -
we could not do this mahi without you.

