

A LIFT FOR LIFESAVING AS ROOKIES GET A LOOK-IN

This summer saw Rookie Lifeguards in the news with a number of youngsters affecting successful rescues (read more on pages 16-17) and a Rookie Festival making the local paper.

Lifesavers is grateful to Todd Miller, Beach Manager for Ryde Beach Lifeguards on the Isle of Wight, for sending in his account of their Rookie Week activities.

“When you live on an island as small as the Isle of Wight, it is vitally important that young people, who find themselves in and around water nearly every day, know how to look after themselves,” explains Todd.

“The beaches here are beautiful, well-maintained and relatively easy to access. This is fabulous for our tourism industry on the island but ready-access to water means people should have ready-access to lifesaving skills too.

“This is why we do the Rookie Week every summer.

The activities are run by our fully-qualified instructors and are run in accordance with the Rookie Lifeguard programme, as well as the RNLI and Swim England ‘Swim Safe’ initiative. This year we had 26 Rookies of mixed abilities join us for the five days and we made sure they never got bored by shaking things up a bit.

“One morning they might have been learning indoors, that afternoon they might have been in the pool. They also did work in the sea and learned about the dangers of cold water shock. The whole week progressed the group towards Rookie Lifeguard Bronze, Silver and Gold levels, with beach bolt-ons included.

“Becca and Amber, the other instructors with me, found that the group dynamic was really positive,

a lot of fun was had learning and practicing together – including all the instructors!

“The week can’t go ahead without the support of the Ryde Beach Lifeguards and Waterside Community Trust organisations – it really is a community scheme that pays dividends; last summer one of our Rookies used her skills to help her sister out of trouble in the water and quite often, the youngsters go on to become qualified pool and beach lifeguards, leading by example and sharing their skills, passion and confidence, with the youngsters coming through.

“It’s a joy to see everyone get their award at the end but it’s particularly special when one of the quieter members of the group, shines.

“When the local paper popped down to cover what we were doing, you’d think the X Factor had come to town – beaming smiles all round!”

“**The beauty of the Rookie Lifeguard programme is its accessibility and flexibility, even the weakest of swimmers can find themselves boosted by working with others and making new friends.**”

Todd Miller
Beach Manager, Ryde Beach Lifeguards



Rookies are all the rage!

Following the announcement of our Strategic Partnership with Swim England, the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) have seen an unprecedented boost in take-up of their Rookie Lifeguard Instructor courses.

The partnership was quick to focus on making it easy for leisure centres to get their existing swimming teachers qualified to teach the Rookie Lifeguard programme and in response, launched a new route to qualification starting from only £10!

The response was an additional 500 instructors qualifying since March and in turn, this has made an extra 23,000+ awards available to young lifesavers making the Rookie Lifeguard programme now more accessible than ever!

Serco Leisure Ltd, David Lloyd Clubs and Freedom Leisure, some of the UK’s best-known multi-site leisure operators, have been quick to snap up Rookie Lifeguard Instructors to meet a growing demand for the programme, with sites hosting Rookie Lifeguard taster sessions, right across June’s RLSS UK Drowning Prevention Week campaign, throughout August’s #BeaRookieLifeguard campaign and beyond.

Having just completed her very first Rookie Lifeguard taster

session, nine-year-old Grace said, “There were a lot of different things to do, some of the exercises were quite hard too. I really enjoyed it all though, especially the timed races – I tried my best to beat everyone!”

As a natural next step after completion of Swim England’s ‘Learn to Swim’ Swim Stage 7, Rookie Lifeguard is a hugely popular and rewarding award scheme. It equips children not just with essential water safety and lifesaving skills but also, the confidence to use them.

Rookie Lifeguard is an excellent retention tool for leisure operators, encouraging young people to maintain and develop their swimming prowess, offering a fun and engaging way of learning and maintaining lifesaving skills, even training the next generation of lifeguards!

“We’ve seen a real upturn in young swimmers through our doors since we first introduced the Rookie Lifeguard programme and the demand continues to grow,” said Louise Wells, Training Manager for Leeds City Council.

“Swimming plays a huge part of our provision at our centres, so it’s important we can offer something more for our youngsters, beyond simply swimming lengths, once they’ve learned to swim.

“We mirror RLSS UK’s belief that swimming is the first line of defence against drowning – upskilling more of our instructors to teach Rookie Lifeguard goes a long way to ensuring our young people and our wider community, is a safe place to be.”

A Rookie Lifeguard’s skillset sets them apart from their peers: with skills that could save a life and the confidence to use them, leisure operators, youth groups, swim teachers and community leaders, can be assured that a Rookie Lifeguard is an asset to any community. ●

