



# COASTGUARD

THE CHARITY SAVING LIVES AT SEA



## Coastguard Supporter Newsletter | Christmas 2021



**The eyes in the sky  
saving lives at sea,  
all because of you!**

### **You are the reason Coastguard volunteers show up, no matter what.**

**Whether they're the calm voice at the other end of the radio, the helping hand pulling people to safety or the eyes in our skies, lives are saved all thanks to you.**

Coastguard volunteers do all they can to save lives at sea. And operating two aircraft to search over large areas is one of them. A rescue mission Air Patrol volunteer Banu will never forget took place on a clear afternoon.

**"We were already in the air and in the middle of an assessment with Alex, one of our trainees, when we got the distress call around 4pm. A Dad and his two children were kayaking out in Kaiaua in the Firth of Thames and had capsized in freezing waters," recalls Banu.**

Banu and Andrew (who was the pilot that day) knew they had to help. You made this happen. You made sure they could be there for this family that day. Thank you.

Coastguard Air Patrol were close and headed straight for the search zone. On the way Andrew radioed the two helicopters that were also helping with the search to map out clear flying areas. This not only made sure every inch of the search area was covered but also eliminated any risk of collision.

*Continued over.*



## The eyes in the sky saving lives at sea, all because of you! *(Continued)*

Banu was in the back of the aircraft making sure the search equipment needed was ready and at hand - binoculars, sea dyes and flares.

She also helped trainee Alex with radio calls and getting the information they needed to find the missing family quickly.

On the ground Waikato Police were coordinating the search with two rescue vessels from Coastguard Maraetai and Coastguard Thames scouring the area for the capsized kayak. It got windier and the sea rougher as the search went on, which made it difficult to see the family in the water.

It was up to Andrew, Banu and Alex to use their eyes from the sky.

Sticking to their fly zone, the Air Patrol crew flew low, at 500 feet, and slowly, at a speed of 80 knots, to give them the best chance of spotting them.

On the third leg of their search and about half an hour later they spotted the empty yellow kayak. Within a minute, they saw a person in the water wearing a lifejacket, huddled with

a child. They couldn't make out whether the Dad had both children or just one, so without a second to spare the crew radioed in their sighting to the search coordinators.

From above, the crew could see the family were struggling and needed help immediately. Banu grabbed the orange sea dye crystals and gave them to Alex to make the drop.

It is something Air Patrol train for. Dropping crystals out of a window in windy conditions requires practice, skill and precision.

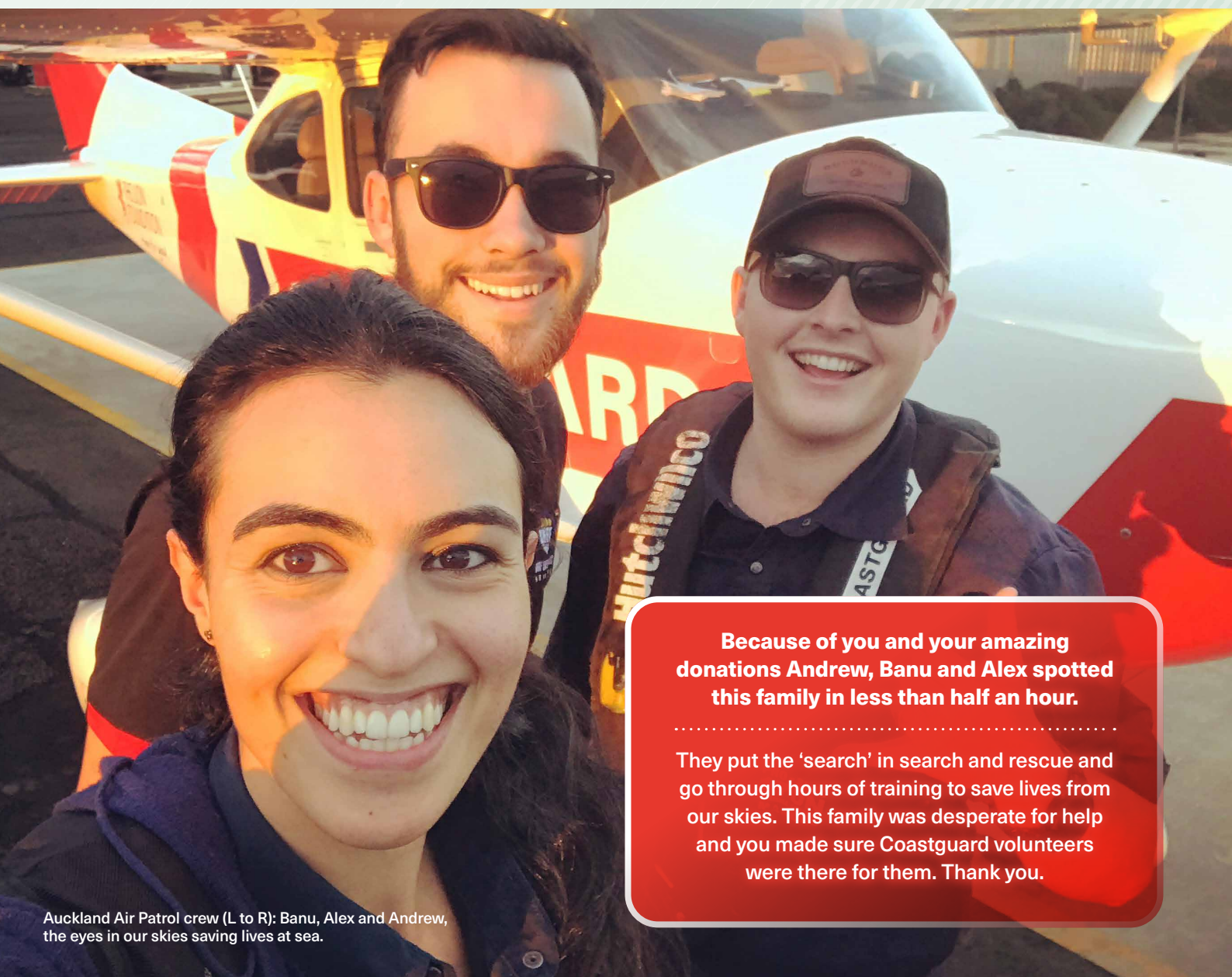
It has to be a swift downward motion so it doesn't get blown back into the aircraft tail. With a steady hand, Alex dropped the orange crystals near the family, turning the water green to mark exactly where the family was.

Coastguard volunteers on the water saw the dye straight away and had the family on board their rescue boat in minutes.

The children were in a critical condition and needed urgent medical attention. They sped across the water to the helicopter waiting at the boat ramp to take them to hospital.

“ If there is ever a question over what your **‘why’** is, this rescue was a good reminder. **It's all about saving lives.** ”

Banu - Coastguard Auckland Air Patrol



**Because of you and your amazing donations Andrew, Banu and Alex spotted this family in less than half an hour.**

They put the 'search' in search and rescue and go through hours of training to save lives from our skies. This family was desperate for help and you made sure Coastguard volunteers were there for them. Thank you.

Auckland Air Patrol crew (L to R): Banu, Alex and Andrew, the eyes in our skies saving lives at sea.



# Ever wondered how your donations help?

## 8,618 people can tell you!

Thanks to you, that is the number of people Coastguard rescued in the last year.

With international travel bans, Kiwis have made the most of our own beautiful backyard which has meant one of the busiest years for Coastguard volunteers. Usually helping around 6,000 people per year, our volunteers touched an extra 2,000 lives last year and you made it happen. Thank you!



### Wind Foiler in trouble

Just before 4pm Coastguard Raglan sped out in their two rescue jetskis to search for a missing wind foiler just outside the Raglan Bar. With Coastguard Air Patrol and other emergency services on stand-by, the rescue jetskis scoured the area. Thankfully one hour later the man was spotted almost 2km offshore. Relieved to see them, he was cold and cramping up but luckily not hypothermic.



### Super Saturday COVID-19 Vaccinations

Coastguard Waiheke volunteers transported residents from Rakino Island to vaccination sites for New Zealand's Super Saturday Vaccination drive. What community spirit!



### Waka Ama Capsize

Six people were tossed from their Waka Ama as they paddled off the Taranaki coast. It was a chilly morning around 8.30am when rough weather caused the Waka Ama to capsize. One person was pulled to safety by another waka crew, while the remaining five spent about 40 minutes in the freezing water before Coastguard Taranaki arrived to haul them to safety.



### Sea Kayaker Capsize

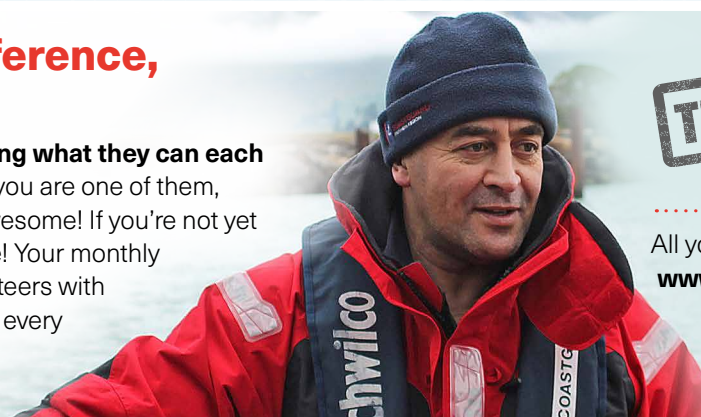
Quick thinking and action by the volunteer crew at Coastguard Sumner meant a sea kayaker who capsized in the surf near Heathcote Estuary got home safely. Hamilton Jet Rescue was launched quickly and the young man was pulled to safety soon after. He had swallowed a lot of sea water and was hypothermic. So the crew removed his wet clothes and wrapped him in blankets while waiting for an ambulance.

“ I can't thank you all enough for rescuing my friend today at Sumner when we got into trouble kayaking. **I will be eternally grateful.** ”

Friend of rescued Kayaker

## You can make a difference, every single month!

Passionate Kiwis like you are giving what they can each month to save lives at sea. And if you are one of them, thank you. What you are doing is awesome! If you're not yet part of the team, we'd love you to be! Your monthly donation will arm Coastguard volunteers with exactly what they need to save lives every single month.



Sign up today!

All you need is your credit card, visit [www.coastguard.nz/teamrescue](http://www.coastguard.nz/teamrescue)

or call Ann and the team on **09 303 4303** (option 4).

# Meet Richard Craig

our 2021 Volunteer of the Year!

Following in his father's footsteps, Richard joined Coastguard Kaikōura over 34 years ago. He's given thousands of hours of his time to saving lives at sea.

As someone with a love for the sea from a young age, it was just a matter of time before Richard would cross paths with Coastguard. That time came when his father, Jack introduced him to Coastguard life.

"When I was a kid at school, dad and his mates set

up the Coastguard Kaikōura base. They wanted a proper way of getting rescued if you needed. They got an old boat and together built the building to operate from, which still stands today."

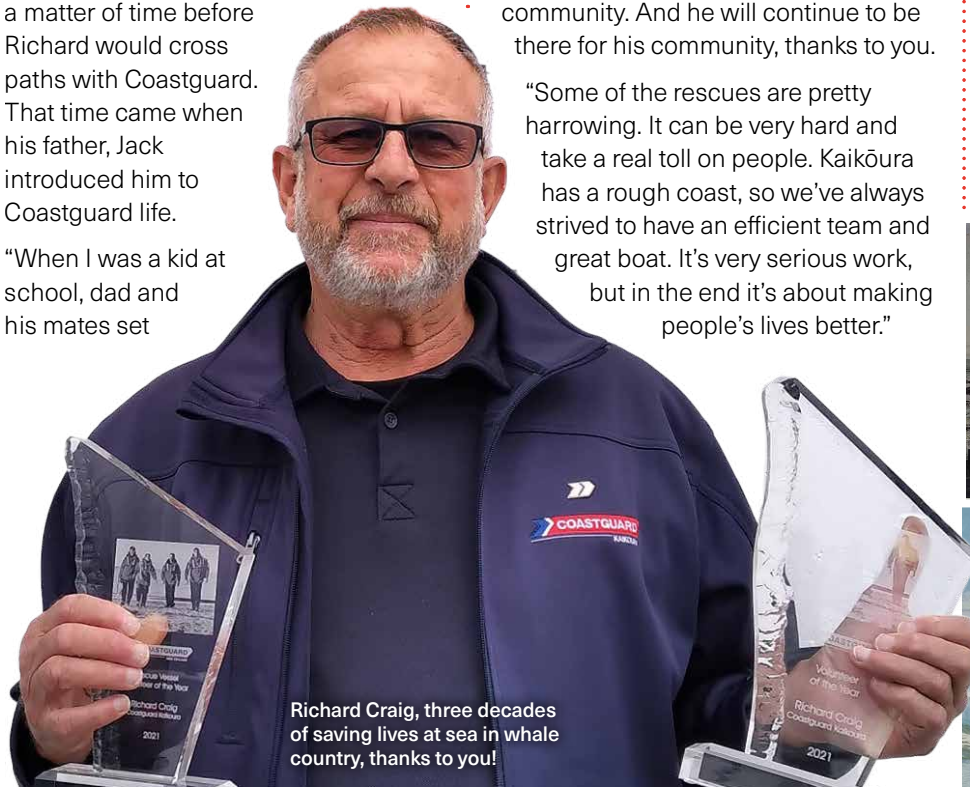
Like his Dad, Richard has helped save many lives in the tight-knit Kaikōura community. And he will continue to be there for his community, thanks to you.

"Some of the rescues are pretty harrowing. It can be very hard and take a real toll on people. Kaikōura has a rough coast, so we've always strived to have an efficient team and great boat. It's very serious work, but in the end it's about making people's lives better."

On or off the water, Richard's dedication to the Coastguard cause is inspiring. But even after 34 years, Richard is still learning.

**The unpredictable nature of the water means volunteers need to be rescue ready 24/7 and that's where you come in. You make sure that's the case with your incredible donations.**

Richard's father, Jack with his mates in the late 60s setting up Coastguard Kaikōura.



**From boots to boats, you make everything we do possible.**

Your donations arm Coastguard volunteers like Richard with equipment and training to bring people home safely. You're a lifesaver! Thank you for your incredible support.



**Callum Gillespie**  
Chief Executive  
Coastguard New Zealand

## Thank you so much for helping our heroes save lives at sea!

Royal New Zealand Coastguard Inc is the charity saving lives at sea  
Charity Registration No CC 36138

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



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