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PRESS RELEASE

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Kerrville Guard Teams Bring Home Gold and Silver Medals at Texas State Lifeguard Championships

Kerrville, Texas (Aug. 1, 2018) – For the third year in a row and the fourth time in six years, a City of Kerrville competitive lifeguard team has been recognized as the best in Texas ... and its closest competition was another Kerrville city team.

The Kerrville Parks and Recreation Department fielded two guard teams this year - the veteran Angels and a team of first-year competitors, the Owls. Both groups competed against 10 other teams at the Games of Texas State Lifeguard Competition July 30 in Bryan, with the Angels winning first place and earning the title of 2018 State Champions. The Owls placed second as runner-up champions.

For both teams to do so well speaks volumes about their dedication.

“Guard Team is an extremely valuable tool for ensuring the safety of our guests at our facilities,” Parks and Recreation Director and guard team coach Ashlea Boyle said. “Our mission is to prevent the loss of life due to drowning. Guard team elevates the knowledge

base of the lifeguard staff through rigorous training in addition to the regular in-service trainings. It adds a sense of camaraderie and pride to the entire facility.

“The Angels and the Owls competed against the best of the best in the state of Texas and came out on top, and we couldn’t be more proud of them,” Boyle continued. “Tears of joy were shed after all was said and done. Three of the Angels competed for three years together, and knew it would be their final year to compete together. It was emotional. I asked them to spread those angel wings for me one last time, and boy did they ever soar.”

The Texas Public Pool Council and the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation teamed up to co-host the state competition in conjunction with the Games of Texas. In order to attend the State Lifeguard Championships, teams had to qualify by placing in the top three at a regional qualifier competition. The Angels and Owls qualified for State after placing first and second, respectively, at the Central Texas Lifeguard Competition held July 18 in Round Rock.

With this state victory, the City of Kerrville has continued its reputation as one of the top teams to beat. The city placed first in state in 2013, 2016, 2017 and 2018 after not participating in guard competitions in 2014 and 2015.

This year’s Angels team members include Jacob Pierz, Courtney LaQuey, Carlos Nava and Michael Tran. The Owls team consists of Corey Smith, Meagan Maxson, Garrison Engstrom and Gabriel Buckholz-Casao.

In addition to their regular lifeguard duties, both teams endured rigorous and specialized training to prepare for these competitions.

“Our teams underwent very intense and exhaustive training to prepare for the competitions,” Boyle said. “A lot was asked of them and they persevered. They are so dedicated and trained tirelessly to improve their skills and get prepared to compete. These individuals are such a fantastic group of young adults. Even with all of their accomplishments, they stayed humble and were extremely grateful for the opportunity. It is truly an honor to work with each and every one of them, and the community should be proud.”

State Championships

The Texas State Lifeguard Championship is comprised of four different events. The teams have no knowledge of what they will face during each event until competition time. For the first and second event, the teams were split into pairs, and they each had to sequentially respond and treat different guest(s).

In the first event, the teams were tasked with rendering aid to a conscious choking infant and a conscious choking pregnant woman.

For the second event, a guest had a seizure as well as a number of first-aid injuries, including a nose bleed, abraded hands and knees, and cuts on the feet and in between the toes. The guards had to use their problem solving skills to determine the type of emergency they were dealing with based on the guest’s symptoms, and then correctly triage the guest according to the order of severity.

In the third event, the team of four provided basic life support care for a guest suffering from cardiac arrest. Care included cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) utilizing a bag-valve-mask, and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED).

The teams then moved on to their first pool scenario, where they were responsible for identifying and appropriately responding to a guest with a spinal injury. To further complicate the situation, the guest was in shallow water with half of his upper body partially submerged and his legs on a narrow wall. The team had to appropriately transfer the guest to the backboard while maintaining spinal motion restriction in order to not injure the guest further. Once the guest was properly secured to the backboard, the guest needed to be extricated from the water safely, covered, and provided secondary care.

In the final pool scenario, the team had to respond to simultaneous emergencies at the diving well and adjacent lap lanes. First, they were to recognize a shadow doll at the bottom of their zone. A shadow doll simulates what a guest at the bottom of a pool would look like. After that and some rule enforcement, the guards on deck performed rescues on two active guests in distress in the deep end. Immediately following the rescues, a third guest in the water suffered from a dislocated knee while performing a flip turn on the wall while swimming laps. This guest needed to be appropriately extricated from the water while stabilizing the injured knee.

Lifeguard competitions are open to all lifeguard training programs, including American Red Cross, YMCA, NASCO, Start Guard, and Jeff Ellis & Associates, which the City of Kerrville utilizes. The guards are meticulously judged on their confidence, teamwork, rule enforcement, problem solving skills, and the ability to recognize and react to each emergency during the scenarios.

Several of the competitions, including the state competition, allowed one lifeguard instructor to participate on each team. However, the City of Kerrville teams did not include an instructor.

“Lifeguard instructors are, in my opinion, expected to perform at an advanced level as these are the professionals that are training the guards,” Boyle said. “I believe the teams should be comprised of only guards. This allows the instructors the opportunity to be the coach.”

The City of Kerrville extends a big “Thank you” to all of the 2018 Kerrville Guard Team sponsors, including the major sponsors, the *Kerrville Professional Firefighter’s Association 3230*. Their sponsorship meant so much to the program and the guards throughout the competitions.

Come out and visit the City of Kerrville’s award-winning guard team members at the Olympic Pool, 601 Olympic Drive! The pool will be open until Aug. 17, so take advantage of the opportunity to meet the best lifeguards in the state of Texas!

For more information, contact Josh Rodrigue at (830) 258-1151 or josh.rodrigue@kerrvilletx.gov, or visit the city’s website at www.kerrvilletx.gov.



The City of Kerrville's 2018 State Champion and State Runner-Up Teams include (from left): Team Angels – Jacob Pierz, Courtney LaQuey, Carlos Nava, Michael Tran and Director of Parks and Recreation and Coach Ashlea Boyle; Team Owls – Garrison Engstrom, Meagan Maxson, Corey Smith and Gabriel Buckholz-Casao.



Pictured from left:
Team Angels - Jacob Pierz, Courtney LaQuey, Carlos Nava and Michael Tran.



Pictured from left:
Team Owls – Garrison Engstrom, Meagan Maxson, Corey Smith and Gabriel Buckholz-Casao.

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