



NEWS From -

Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing

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Man Saved from Drowning AFRAS (Association For Rescue At Sea) Honors C-PORT Member with Lifesaving Award



C-PORT (Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing) and AFRAS (Association For Rescue At Sea) celebrated and presented its distinguished lifesaving award at the 32nd C-PORT Conference and Membership Meeting held on November 12 at the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista, Orlando, FL. Presenting the award on behalf of AFRAS was Mr. Charles “Skip” Bowen, Master Chief of the USCG (retired), to Captain Blake Gifford and Captain Julie Lindell, Sea Tow Great South Bay.

This is the ninth year that AFRAS presented this prestigious award to a C-PORT member. In 2010, AFRAS had expressed a desire to establish a program, in cooperation with C-PORT, to annually recognize a deserving member of C-PORT that has shown exceptional skill and determination to save lives during a rescue incident in the maritime environment. The Award is to be conferred on an individual or group of individuals who perform exceptional acts in attempting to save life. Instances where the rescuer places their own life at risk are given highest consideration. Captain Ryan Bayley, owner of Sea Tow Great South Bay added, “Also notable is that Gifford is just 20 years old and Lindell is 22 years old!”

On July 21, 2018, after getting a call for a boater out of fuel, Sea Tow Great South Bay dispatched Captain Julie Lindell and Captain Blake Gifford to respond. The two captains were sent together on one towboat because the wind was so strong, and the sea conditions were very poor. When the captains were about half way there, the boater called to report that two of the passengers on the boat had gone overboard. Immediately Lindell and Gifford radioed for additional help and raced to the area where they spotted one of the men on the beach, but the other struggling to stay afloat in the 30+ mph winds and 4-5 foot seas. Sea Tow Great South Bay sent another vessel with 2 captains and the Suffolk County Police launched a helicopter to the scene.

As soon as Gifford and Lindell got close enough, Lindell immediately inflated her PFD and jumped into the water and was able to reach the man. She kept his head up and breathing for about 4 minutes despite the man outweighing her. A Suffolk Police Sergeant arrived and also jumped in the water to help Lindell with the man, leaving his vessel unmanned and adrift. A Sayville Fire Department boat was soon able to get all three of them on board their vessel and take them to awaiting ambulances inside Browns River. With everyone safe, Gifford skillfully managed to get a line on the unmanned police boat before it went on the nearby rock Jetty and towed it to Sayville.

Lindell and the Suffolk Police Sergeant were shaken up, but okay. The man who initially went overboard fought for his life through the night and made it and is alive and well today because of their heroism. Tina Cardone, C-PORT executive director, commented, “A remarkable presence of mind and the calm actions of these 2 young captains lead to a lifesaving outcome. This is a proud moment for our industry.”



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C-PORT was founded in 1986 to act as a liaison between the marine assistance industry and public agencies and organizations involved with boating safety, marine assistance, marine salvage and other marine-related operations. Our members are dedicated to providing prompt, professional and timely assistance to all boaters and to actively partner and cooperate with local law enforcement and U.S. Coast Guard. For more information, contact C-PORT at (954) 261-2012 or visit www.cport.us.