

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In 2021, I was afforded the pleasure of continuing in my role as President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Branch of the Royal Life Saving Society Canada. I am happy to relay that our Lifesaving Society maintains a strong and stable provincial presence thanks to the tireless work of our dedicated staff, volunteers and affiliates, to whom we are ever grateful. The year offered its share of challenges, but together we were up to the task. And our efforts ensure that our Society is able to advance our mission to deliver consistent and reliable member services, and critical and effective drowning prevention education to the citizens of our province.

2021 also saw a milestone in the arena of drowning prevention: the approval and issuance of the United Nations Resolution on Drowning Prevention. We celebrate this event on our cover. This resolution was adopted by the UN General Assembly on April 28, 2021, and was one in which

Canada played a key role, including being a co-sponsor of the resolution. This historic resolution will help focus attention and action on drowning prevention around the world. It is a significant milestone which will spur policies, research and support for our cause. As part of this resolution, the first ever World Drowning Prevention Day was recognized on July 25, 2021.

The World Health Organization estimates 236,000 people died from drowning last year making it a leading cause of unintentional injury deaths worldwide. This staggering number highlights the importance of good data to understand the extent of the drowning problem and to measure the impact of our drowning prevention work over time. I am proud to report that, despite the challenges in data collection, we were again able to publish our Newfoundland and Labrador Drowning Report.

The *2021 Newfoundland and Labrador Drowning Report* showed a historic low death rate for the province of 1.9 per 100,000. This is significant news when we consider the death rate was as high as 7.0 as recently as 2009. That is very positive and exciting news and validates the hard work we do in support of our mission. I hope it spurs all us to continue our efforts and to continue to drive the number of drownings in Newfoundland and Labrador towards zero.

Frustratingly, sharing these consequential stories in person remained a challenge in 2021, so maintaining consistent and ongoing digital contact with our members remained a priority. We continued to host our AGM and other meetings by videoconference allowing easy access for our members; and we maintained timely member communications via our website, social media accounts and the quarterly circulation of our *Currents* newsletter, which currently reaches over 3,000 members. Our provincial office also remains at the ready to assist our members and ensures there is always someone they can speak to for their needs.

On the program side, we oriented Lifesaving Instructors to the revised Bronze Medal awards with the *Explore Bronze Update Clinic* that launched in January. The clinic was easy to access online or in-person and was well received by our aquatic community. This coincided with the publication of our *2021 Program Guide* that featured the new Bronze medals award descriptions, updated prerequisites, and identification of certifications that can be delivered via blended learning or online.

In administrative news, our Branch continues to prosper in serving our members and affiliates under the stewardship of our excellent CEO, **Raegan Wiseman**, who continues to be an inestimable asset to the Lifesaving Society. We also had the pleasure this year to welcome **Ryan Gosse** to the Board as our new VP – Finance. We are thrilled to have him aboard.

In closing, I wish to offer my ongoing appreciation to my fellow Board members and to all our dedicated staff, volunteers, and affiliates for everything you do in service of drowning prevention in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Gary Nolan

