

LIFESAVING FOUNDATION TO RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS

CELEBRATING ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR, THE LIFESAVING FOUNDATION HAS ROLLED OUT A NEW RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN, IS PLANNING TO INCREASE ITS RANGE OF SERVICES FOR MEMBERS AND IS ALSO LOOKING TO APPOINT A PART-TIME EMPLOYEE.

Like all charities in Ireland, we are struggling to fund ourselves. So, we have decided that rather than shrink our activities we will instead expand them within and outside of Ireland and hold a new membership drive," according to John Connolly, the honorary chief executive officer of the Lifesaving Foundation.

Connolly claimed that while this is financially risky, nonetheless he believes the "current situation has given us the necessary kick up the butt to go to the professional and voluntary emergency services communities and shout about what we do and have the potential to do".

He said that the Foundation also aims to provide financial and technical aid to lifesavers in developing countries. "A five-year review showed that we were in the 'give a man a fish and you feed him for a day' situation rather than the preferred 'teach a man to fish and you feed him for life' option.

"We were also aware that in bringing together some of the world's leading lifesaving experts, we have a drowning prevention obligation to our own communities.

Many drowning incidents apply worldwide to rich and poor alike but national lifesaving organisations naturally tend to focus on their specific aspects of the reasons for such incidents."

The Foundation currently has about 200 members from 10 countries on its books, and according to Connolly, "their educational qualifications range from full university professor to basic schooling, while their occupations range from medical professors to unemployed labourers". However, he claimed that what they all share is an interest in saving lives from drowning and in sharing their experiences.



Ireland Medal recipients and Lifesaving Foundation members Australian Prof John Pearn (2005), John Connolly (2012), and American Prof Linda Quan (2011) with Lifesaving Foundation chairperson Brendan Donohoe.

"With access to world leading research from within its membership and supporters, it therefore has the capacity to adopt a wide multi-faceted view of the leading causes of death by drowning," he added.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

The Foundation is now expanding its services to members. The 'Members-Only' section on the website has been upgraded to include papers on drowning research, national and international drowning reports, filmed presentations from the 2011 and 2012 Foundation conferences, and drowning-related film excerpts from news organisations worldwide.

"The Foundation's board recognises that lifesavers are busy people and often don't have the time to trawl through the huge amount of material on the web. To facilitate this new service a part-time position will be created within the Foundation."

An organisation can be represented by a named individual member. An annual membership fee of €100 can be paid online at www.lifesavingfoundation.ie. "We want members to be active rescuers as this will enrich future discussions. Members can play an active or passive role in the charity; standing for election to the Board of Directors or they can access new research in the 'Members-Only' section of the website."

Every year leading members of the drowning research community are invited to Ireland to address the charity's annual conference. "Members are entitled to attend conferences, to meet participants and to receive invitations to the Ireland Medal ceremony," noted Connolly.

The Foundation's 2014 conference will take place in the Bracken Court Hotel, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin (30 September-2 October). The event will focus on the revised edition of 'The Handbook on Drowning', which will be published later this year.