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PRESS RELEASE

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Kerrville Guard Team Takes Home the Gold at State Lifeguard Championships

Kerrville, Texas (August 5, 2016) – The City of Kerrville Parks and Recreation Department’s competitive Lifeguard Team competed against 11 other teams at the Games of Texas State Lifeguard Championships in McAllen, Texas on August 1, 2016. The team won 1st Place and brings home gold medals earning the title of the 2016 State Champions.

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 City of Kerrville Guard Team qualified with 2nd Place in the regional qualifier at the Central Texas Lifeguard Competition held in New Braunfels on July 18, 2016. In addition to placing 2nd overall, the team received awards in three divisions 1st place in the *CPR / First-Aid* event, 2nd in the *Scenarios* event, and 2nd in the *Scanning* event.

A Lifeguard Competition Team or “Guard Team” consists of four lifeguards, typically two female and two male. The 2016 Kerrville Lifeguard Team members include Wren Vogel, Jacob Pierz, Courtney LaQuey, Carlos Nava, and alternate Taylor Benedick, all of whom are first year competitors. Nava is a first year lifeguard.

In addition to their regular lifeguard duties, the team endures rigorous and specialized training to prepare for these competitions.

The State Championship is comprised of three different events. The teams have no knowledge of what they will face during each event until competition time.

For the first event, *CPR*, the team was split into pairs. Each pair had to sequentially respond and treat a conscious choking infant, an unconscious child, and an unconscious adult. The unconscious child initially was not breathing and required artificial respiration with a bag-valve-mask. The child then had an airway obstruction that needed to be cleared. After the airway was clear, the child proceeded into cardiac arrest requiring CPR. The adult guest also suffered from cardiac arrest requiring CPR.

Then the team moved on to the *First-Aid* event. For this event, the team was again divided into pairs. Each pair was given a guest with identical symptoms including: heat exhaustion, diabetic emergency, broken teeth, a cut on the eyeball, an asthma attack, a bee sting, a chemical burn, and a cut 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.

The final event was the *Pool Scenario*. Lifeguards had to respond to simultaneous emergencies at the pool which included treating a guest with a nosebleed, rescuing a distressed child from the water, rescuing an unconscious guest from the water, extricating a

conscious guest with a spinal injury from the pool, and rescuing a shadow doll, which simulated an unconscious guest on the bottom of the pool.

The team was further challenged during this event with access to only one backboard, and multiple other guests in and around the pool deck acting as a distraction. The guards were required to communicate with each other in order to prioritize and effectively attend to the guest with the most life-threatening emergency first, the unconscious guest. After extricating that guest from the pool, the guest had to be safely removed from the board, and properly cared for while the remaining team members effectively tended to the other injured individuals and enforced rules for all other guests. Many teams missed the shadow doll at the bottom of the pool; however, the Kerrville Guard Team saw it and successfully rescued it.

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

The competitions technically allow one lifeguard instructor to participate on each team, however, the City of Kerrville team did not include an instructor. "I believe the guard competitions should be limited to only lifeguards, as Lifeguard Instructors are expected to perform at a higher level," said Ashlea Boyle, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation and the coach of the Kerrville Guard Team. "Our team is only comprised of lifeguards, and seeing what they accomplished speaks volumes of their skill level. The events were extremely challenging this year and it was interesting to see how each team performed under pressure."

The City of Kerrville Guard Team beat the runner up, Schlitterbahn, by 29 points. The Schlitterbahn team only scored 5 points higher than 3rd place team, The Woodlands Township. Both the first and second place teams utilize the Jeff Ellis & Associates International Lifeguard Training Program.

“Guard Team is an extremely valuable tool for ensuring the safety of our guests at our facilities. It elevates the knowledge base of the lifeguard staff through rigorous training on top of the regular in-service trainings. It adds a sense of camaraderie and pride to the entire facility,” said Boyle. “Our team underwent very intense and exhausting training to prepare for the competitions. They are so dedicated and worked tirelessly, all the while asking for increased challenges to improve their skills. They competed against the best of the best in the State and came out on top. With this victory, we have earned the reputation as one of the top teams to beat. We couldn’t be more proud of them.”

If you’re interested in becoming a Kerrville Lifeguard for the summer of 2017 please contact [Parks & Recreation Specialist](#) Steve Gordon at (830) 258-1151.

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Kerrville Competitive Guard Team

Pictured from left to right: Taylor Benedick, Jacob Pierz, Wren Vogel, Carlos Nava, Courtney LaQuey