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## Backyard pool accidents preventable: supervisor

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Merit from the Lifesaving Society for his efforts at Kearney Lake.

"When we heard the screaming, it was Will who recognized the distress. I just thought it was fooling around," Mr. Green said. "I'm incredibly proud and proud too, that he took the initiative to save the life, that he had the knowledge and that he had the composure to take over the situation."

The Bill Crothers Secondary School student who's just completed Grade 9 was able to help the pair because just a two weeks earlier he completed his Bronze Cross certification at the Lebovic Leisure Centre.

"I was really astonished and proud of myself that I could get this award at age 15," he said.

Will and his younger brother, James, 12, grew up around water and were always taught to respect it.

Their mother, Dianne, is a former lifeguard and their father is a former Toronto firefighter.

"To me, learning how to swim and stay afloat is an essential life skill," Mr. Green said.

Will works at the pool as an instructor.

In an effort to teach young children water safety skills, the York Region District Board of Education and the York Catholic District School Board have partnered with various aquatic facilities throughout the region to provide students in Grade 3 the Swim to Survive program.

The program has been offered at the Lebovic Leisure Centre pool since 2006.

"It's meant to prepare them for an unexpected fall into deep water," said Stacey Stevens, aquatic supervisor at the pool.

Children are taught a specific skill sequence over three in-water sessions: roll into deep water, tread water for

one minute and swim 50 m.

The rolling simulates an unexpected fall into the water, treading water enables the child to get his or her bearings and swimming gets the child to shore, the pool edge or boat.

"It's awareness and respecting the water," Ms Stevens said. "Even after only three weeks, it's amazing the improvements you see."

There is also a classroom component on water safety.

Swimming is the second most popular activity, after bicycling, in Canada among children between five and 12 years of age, yet about half of Canadian children never take traditional swimming lessons, according to the Lifesaving Society.

"We're very fortunate in Stouffville and I think a lot of parents recognize the importance of swimming lessons," Ms Stevens said.

"To me, it's so preventable some of the things that happen in the summer in backyard pools."

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