

Giving away time out to save lives

Nicole Bennik
nicole.bennik@msl.co.nz

Saving a one-armed man from rowing around in circles, towing a whale and releasing albatrosses into the wild are all in a day's work for the Judds.

Leighton Judd has volunteered at the Manawatu Volunteer Coastguard for 14 years and has been president for three.

His wife Janelle Judd had been involved in administrative work for Coastguard for six years and joined the crew when he became president.

"Without Janelle's support I couldn't have volunteered for so many years at sea," Mr Judd said. "Being president of Manawatu Volunteer Coastguard also involves heaps of land-based hours where she has to hold the fort at home with our two young children. Her commitment to Coastguard is as great as mine."

As part of Volunteer Awareness Week, the couple have hosted a number of school visits to encourage the next generation of volunteers.

They hope their children, Rhyleigh, 2, and Hadley, 8 weeks, will also get the volunteer bug when they are older.

There are 23 volunteers in the Manawatu Volunteer Coastguard. They are in the water minutes after getting a callout, rescuing people in trouble, towing boats and assisting with various other jobs.

Mr Judd said he was thankful for their hard work and dedication.

He appreciated the fact that Volunteer Awareness Week encouraged people to reflect on the sacrifices made by often unrecognised members of the community.



All in the family: Leighton and Janelle Judd, pictured with their two children, Rhyleigh, 2, and Hadley, 8 weeks have spent more than 20 years combined volunteering at Manawatu Volunteer Coastguard.

Photo: MURRAY WILSON

"A lot of our skippers are self-employed. They are the busy people in the community and they give so much," Mr Judd said.

"Without the hard work of our volunteers lives would be lost."

Coastguard callouts have decreased in the past few years, mostly due to safety education, but is still valued in the community.

Nationwide, volunteers sacrificed 319,679 combined hours between July 2010 and

May 2011. Coastguard responds to an average of 10 calls a day, and rescued more than 6560 people last year, averaging 17 a day.

Coastguard New Zealand chief executive Bruce Reid praised the efforts of the Manawatu Coastguard.

"The support team behind our Coastguard volunteers, such as Janelle Judd, also deserve a massive 'thank you' and Volunteer Awareness Week seems like a great time to do this."

Manawatu Standard Wed 22 June 2011