



## Elgin County Drowning Prevention Proclamation Request - July 21-27, 2024

Dear County of Elgin,

Canada continues to face a major problem – and a preventable one: over 450 people die every year from drowning. In fact, the drowning burden is so great around the world that the United Nations General Assembly passed the UN Resolution on Drowning Prevention (A/75/L.76) and named July 25<sup>th</sup> of each year as World Drowning Prevention Day. On behalf of the Elgin County Drowning Prevention Coalition, I am writing to ask that you proclaim July 21 - 27th, 2024 as **DROWNING PREVENTION WEEK** in the County of Elgin, aligning with the Lifesaving Society of Canada's NATIONAL Drowning Prevention Week.

The Elgin County Drowning Prevention Coalition, was formed by two local individuals, MaryKate Townsend and Briar McCaw, partnering with community stakeholders to create awareness about water safety and drowning prevention in our communities. Briar McCaw has dedicated her undergraduate Health Sciences Research Project at Queen's University to identifying those most at risk of drowning in Elgin and surrounding counties, in order to make a difference in our community.

Through research and data analytics, it is our intention to focus media and community attention on the drowning problem and drowning prevention. During this week, the ECDPC urges individuals to:

- Supervise children in and around the water (including pools, bathtubs, open water, etc.)
- Learn to Swim
- Swim with a buddy
- Refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages while participating in all types of aquatic activities (including boating)
- Wear a lifejacket when boating, including kayaks, canoes and paddle boards
- Learn the dangers of your environment, whether open water, pools, or agricultural settings

If everyone followed these guidelines, we could greatly reduce the impact of not only fatal drownings, but non-fatal drownings as well. Some of our key focus areas are children, immigrants (including migrant workers), and anyone faced with cultural or language barriers that may prevent them from learning to swim or understanding water safety practices.

An annual proclamation from Warden Ketchabaw would continue to give great exposure to our lifesaving efforts to residents of Elgin County. It would be a great honour if Warden Ketchabaw could declare July 21-27, 2024 Drowning Prevention week in the County of Elgin, by raising our flag once again.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 519-854-3198 or [ecdrowningprevention@gmail.com](mailto:ecdrowningprevention@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

*MaryKate Townsend*

MaryKate Townsend, Co-Chair, Elgin County Drowning Prevention Coalition