

A 16-Year-Old Lifeguard's 'Heroic' Rescue Earns Him a Trip to the White House After Trump Sees Footage

President Donald Trump is bringing a 16-year-old California lifeguard to the White House to honor him after his heroic rescue of a young boy over the weekend.

NBC affiliate KNTV reported that the Saturday rescue, caught on video that went viral, took place at Seabright Beach in Santa Cruz in northern California.

"The waves, I wouldn't say they were tranquil, but they were what you'd expect, a normal cadence and intensity," witness Scott Vander Dussen said.



To order Jonathan Cahn's new book, The Altar of Pergamon, visit .

"And then that just changed in a heartbeat. It caught a lot of people off-guard. Unfortunately, this young man was overwhelmed and swept out in just a moment's time. I'm glad it ended the way it did. I'm certain if the lifeguards weren't there, he wouldn't have gone home that night," Vander Dussen added.

Video of the incident showed the lifeguard, identified only as Ryder, holding on to the boy with a bulldog grip as waves crashed over them time and again, knocking them down and pulling them back into the water.

A 16-year-old lifeguard dragged a 10-year-old boy to safety after he was struggling with massive waves at a beach in

Santa Cruz, California, on Saturday. Video shows the teen rescuing the boy and eventually getting him to shore.

– CBS News (@CBSNews) July 28, 2026

Men could be seen trying to help the lifeguard with the rescue, only to retreat to the shore after being whipped around by the sea.

Eventually, a second lifeguard showed up and helped Ryder drag the boy to safety.

The youngster, believed to be about 10 years old, was evaluated by paramedics and released to his family.

Harrowing moment little boy is rescued from crashing waves at Santa Cruz beach

– New York Post (@nypost) July 28, 2026

Eric Trump posted on social media in response to the rescue, “Give this 16-year-old lifeguard the highest civilian honor. This is truly the best of America! Well done!”

President Trump responded, “We’re going to bring this heroic young man, and his family, into the White House with, perhaps, the boy he saved, to give him a High Civilian Honor. Very brave, he deserves it!”

We’re going to bring this heroic young man, and his family, into the White House with, perhaps, the boy he saved, to give him a High Civilian Honor. Very brave, he deserves it!
President DONALD J. TRUMP

– Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) July 28, 2026

Fox News reported that Ryder's mother thanked people for the praise they have heaped on her son.

"I am blown away by the love, kindness, gratitude and respect you're sending his way!" she said. "A few people have asked about a GoFundMe – but honestly he was just doing the job that he absolutely loves."

"Instead, she encouraged those wishing to support Ryder to donate to the Santa Cruz County Parks Department's Junior Guards program, where she said Ryder and many of his fellow lifeguards trained before becoming old enough to serve," according to Fox News.

KNTV noted, "While officials did not discuss the specific training of the lifeguard involved, Santa Cruz lifeguards are required to complete at least 56 hours of lifeguard training, 24 hours of medical certification training and more than 80 hours of marine safety lifeguard training."

This article originally appeared on The Western Journal and is reposted with permission.